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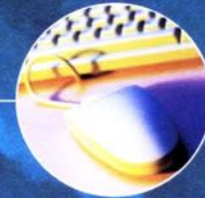
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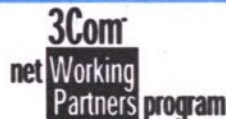
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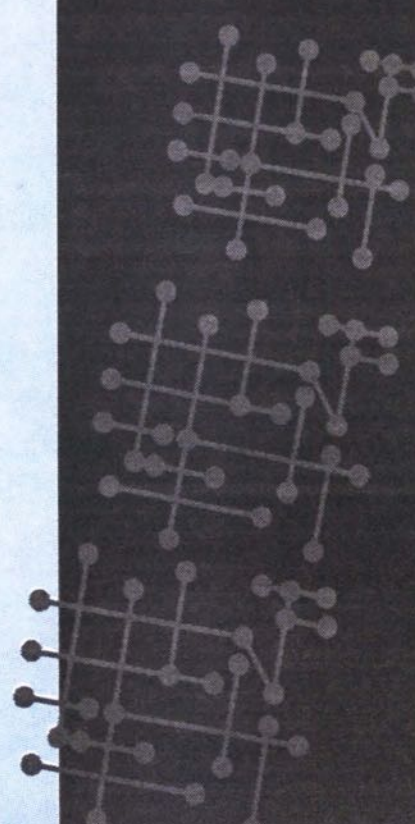
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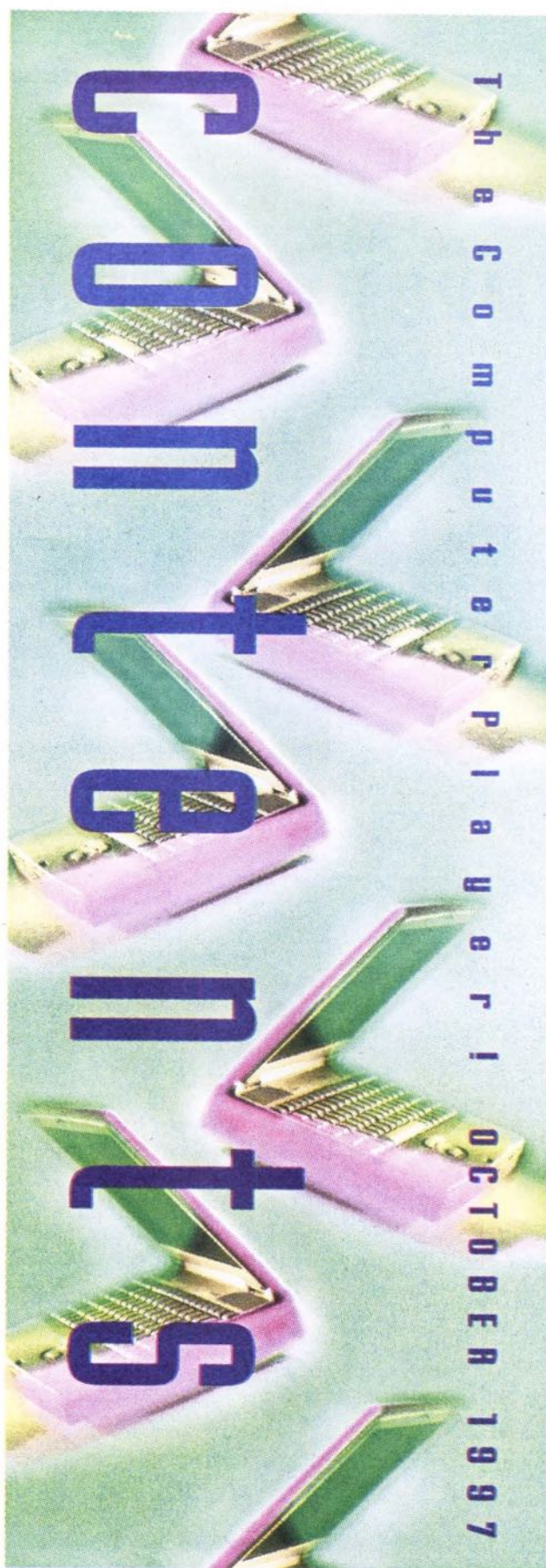
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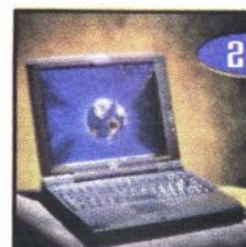
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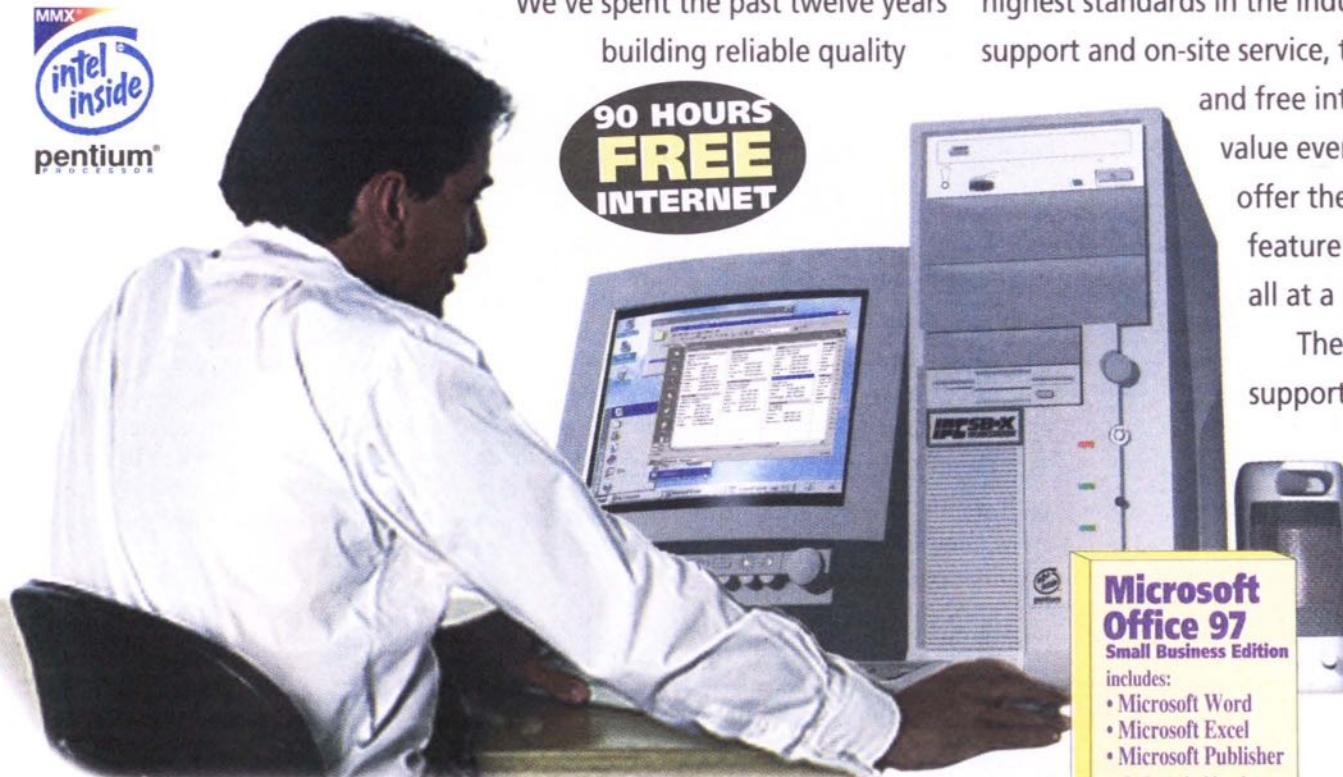
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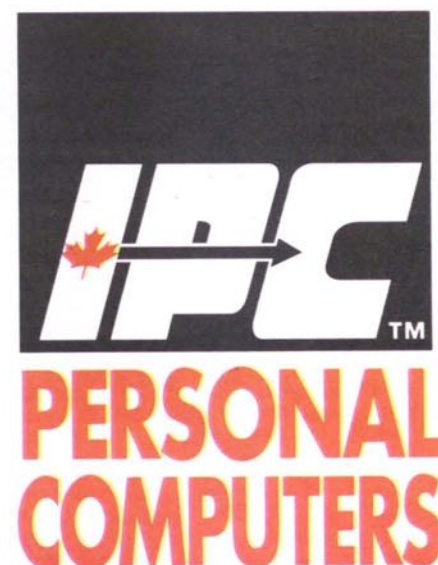
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Video Card	S3 VIRGE 2MB	2MB	1MB	2MB ATI
Office 97 SBE	included	included	included	included
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World domination via the Information Highway

Letter from the editor



Canadians are poised to lead the world as it enters the "knowledge-based era," according to the Minister of Industry, John Manley, who recently took time out from wooing international software developers and investors at Softworld in Vancouver to unveil the final report from the Information Highway Advisory Council, *Preparing Canada for a Digital World*.

Manley was joined by two British Columbia council members, Doug Holtby and Gerri Sinclair, and council chair, David Johnston, in presenting their recommendations, which include:

- building Canada's networks and network infrastructure;
- realizing the economic and social potential of the Internet;
- stimulating the production and distribution of Canadian Content;
- accelerating access to the Information Highway;
- responding to changes in learning and the workplace;
- and transforming government into a "model user" of the Information Highway.

And if this council's history is anything to go by—80 percent of the recommendations made in its first report last September have already been adopted by the federal government—the latest recommendations have a good chance of having a life beyond the printed page.

(The full text of both reports can be found on the Web at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/IHAC>.)

"We must seize the opportunity technology presents," Johnston said at the unveiling. He added that in doing business, communicating, and conducting our daily lives "we are at the vortex of tremendous change... Nobody is in a better position than we are, but many are in a similar positions and success in the knowledge-based era will be based on being number one."

The council's report urges the government to take steps to make Canada the "most" connected nation.

Johnston said one thing that gives Canadians an edge in this charge into the future is our adaptability. Apparently, as a nation, we take to new technology like lemmings to a cliff edge. As an example of our

user friendliness, he cited statistics on the way Canadians adapted to debit cards. The number of transactions using this new technology in Canada equals that of the United States, making per capita use here 10 times that of our nearest neighbor.

We are also in gear to be most connected, Johnston said, because of our existing level of communication infrastructure: Canadians are first in the world in access to telephone and coaxial cable service, and we have one of the fastest broadband networks on Earth, the government-sponsored CA*net.

But despite our current positive position, Manley said, we do have a long way to go in addressing the disparities in access to these services that already exist. Although the Information Highway is readily accessible in urban areas, it dwindles to a mere footpath outside of our major cities. And, according to the report, access is not equal in both official languages.

One of the council's priorities that is already being realized is to encourage digital literacy by ensuring every Canadian school has full Internet access by 1998.

Another area that is now benefiting from this technology push is business. June Campbell takes a look at how some B.C. businesses are making use of Industry Canada's Strategis Web site to reach new markets and investors (see page 30).

In this issue

We also address small business in this issue, specifically the small office and home office (SOHO) sector. Alan Thwaites takes a look at the trends in self-employment, a category in which 15 percent of working Canadians now fall. This is up from 11 percent 20 years ago (see page 10).

Also in this issue, readers tired of Mac users trumpeting the security superiority of their operating system will be pleased to learn the Swedish company that issued a challenge to hackers to crack its Mac server is finally having to pay out—though a company representative does explain that the problem was not in the server but in a security hole in third-party software (see page 18).

Let us know what you think!
 Megan Johnston, Associate Editor
meganj@tcp.ca

Your letters please

Letters on issues raised in the paper or general computer topics are welcome. Please be brief. We regret that we are unable to look up stories from past issues, suggest products, or solve all your computer problems. Only those with names and e-mail or snail-mail addresses will be published. Letters may be edited for space or content.

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Multimedia encyclopedias: Who do you trust?

Re: Cliff Cunningham's article, "Multimedia Encyclopedias: A Matter of Trust" [August issue]. I sensed a very negative slant toward the use of multimedia encyclopedias as an educational tool. It is true that some of the information on these discs is either incorrect or outdated. But I'm sure if Mr. Cunningham had also sifted through the pages of several conventional encyclopedias, his findings would have been much the same.

Cathryn Phendler, Kidzmedia

Your welcome, your welcome, your welcome

Thank you, thank you, thank you for a review of multimedia encyclopedias that actually con-

sidered their content! I am completely sick of reviews that do everything but tell me how good the information is. My conclusion to date is that, with the exception of Britannica, not one multimedia encyclopedia is worth a dime to a reasonably educated adult.

David Schreiber, via the Internet

All play and no work?

Re: Hilary Van Welter's column [August issue]. I am a 29-year-old software engineer. I graduated in Timisoara, Romania in 1991 and I came here in October 1994. I am a little bit scared about the Canadian school system these days. It is a joke compared to the Eastern European system. Some find that learning while playing is very good but is the hard work only at the university level? I do agree with unlocking the human spirit, but kids don't have enough mental power to decide fully for themselves. I don't agree with letting kids do only what they like and want. To like something is to try to understand and use it first—liking it will come because you start knowing that field.

Marcel Ban

Dotto voices reader's wish

Steve Dotto's article in the September issue ["Change my approach, not my tools"] expresses the way I am hoping the Internet will go. I have one voice-input program loaded and find it not too satisfactory. I will watch for developments.

I use a computer at work and when I am home I often don't want to sit in front of a screen. This is when I use one of my voice-out-

put screen-reader programs. I can walk around, sit on the patio, lie on a couch, etc., and LISTEN to the information.

Bert Staddon, via email

Megan Johnston replies: Readers interested in current offerings in voice-recognition software should turn to page 46 for reviews of products from IBM and Dragon, and to page 49 to read about the Advanced Chinese Input Suite, a package that allows writers to create Chinese characters with voice input rather than complicated codes.

Only in Toronto you say...?

Although I noticed that the article was focused on Internet educational programs in and around the Toronto area, I feel it necessary to point out that the Continuing Studies department of the University of British Columbia has offered, since January 1996, a comprehensive Webmaster program entitled The UBC Certificate in Internet Publishing.

The program currently has over 80 participants and recently won the 1997 Award of Excellence from the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education. The program entails over 160 hours of instruction in all aspects of Internet Publishing, from HTML Authoring and Interface Design to Internet Law and Ethics and Internet Marketing, plus instruction on the latest online technologies. For more information, please visit us at <http://www.cstud-ies.ubc.ca/netcert/>.

Kim Clayton, Promotions Consultant, Internet

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letters

continued from page 6

Programs, UBC Continuing Studies.

Megan Johnston replies: Due to space limitations, this item did not run in the online education feature in the Computer Player! (August issue), but we included this letter because we felt it would be of interest to B.C. readers. To check out the original article, point your Web browser to <http://www.torontocomputes.com>.

Half a glitch

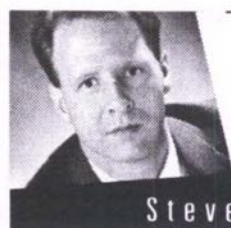
I was reading "Handling Windows 95 glitches" by Lynn Greiner [September issue]. It says that Windows 95 does not run scandisk after an unscheduled restart. This depends on what version of Windows 95 you have. If you have Windows 95 version A, this is true. If you have Windows 95 version B, because this version uses FAT32, it automatically runs scandisk.

Ali Mirkarimi, via the Internet

Oops!

We apologize to our September cover girl, Ziggy Lorenc, for spelling her name incorrectly in the September issue. ♦

Out with the new, in with the old



Street Buzz

Steve Bain

While one large high-technology firm announced recently it would pare down its local operations, another announced it would expand into B.C. Advanced Gravis Computer Technology Ltd. announced last month it would be moving the bulk of its operations south of the border in an attempt to stem mounting losses. The red ink comes after two failed local acquisition attempts, one for Vancouver-based Nam Tai Electronics and the other for Hong Kong-based Yanion International Holdings. Add to that a hefty lawsuit settlement of nearly \$600,000 with U.S.-based Focal Point 3D Audio in a lost copyright infringement case. The company will reduce its staff of 150 to just 25, who will stay on to continue with the

company's research and development.

As Advanced Gravis all but exits the local high-tech scene, Hewlett-Packard Canada (HP) announced recently it will close its Edmonton facility and consolidate operations in Montreal and Vancouver. Of the 130 employees to be laid off, about half will come west. HP's Edmonton facility was responsible for developing, testing, and measuring technology for Internet and telecommunication applications. HP is known as a heavy recruiter of recent university graduates and already has close connections with Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia.

ICBC hits the information highway

In an effort to combat new Canadian insurance upstarts and raise public awareness, the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia has launched its own Web site. The site is geared toward providing customers with detailed information on auto coverage, insurance fraud, anti-theft devices and road safety. There's even a consumer tips section on

shopping for the safest automobile. Besides being an alternative to calling your local Autoplan agent, the site also includes entertaining tales of how people have tried to commit insurance fraud and been caught in the process. A comment forum also enables you to send questions or comments directly to I.C.B.C. staff for review and response. For more information, visit the site at <http://www.icbc.com>.

Mainframe posts a loss

After Mainframe Entertainment Inc.'s public share offering earlier this year, its earning performance has come under scrutiny. The company has posted its first quarterly results as a public company—a loss of \$2.5 million in the first quarter, ending in June. Just one year ago, losses were nearly \$400,000 for the same period. Mainframe Entertainment is a leading computer animation firm and producers of the popular television adventure show *ReBoot*. It produces 29

continued on page 13

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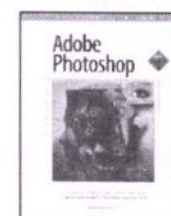
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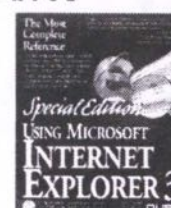
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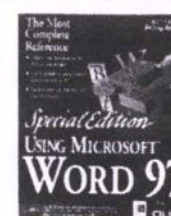
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What's happening in SOHO

A look at small and home office trends

BY ALAN THWAITS

"The times they are a changin'," sang the troubadour in 1969. If only he knew, if only he knew.

As we climb towards the next millennium, hard-driving trends in two areas are affecting us all. Those areas are computers—which, in 1969, were reserved for the high foreheads of academe and the military, and business, which, in 1969, belonged to the Big Boys, the likes of Esso, the banks, and automobile manufacturers. What's changed? And why? And what's coming next?

Well, if we look to the business scene, there

have been lots of changes. Talk of the "military-industrial complex" has been replaced by talk about "multi-nationals." Monopolies (real and alleged) are still with us, but their names are Microsoft and Time Warner rather than Rand or IBM. Job security is gone, pensions are up for grabs, and there's a whole generation of 20- and 30-somethings looking at a lifetime of McJobs. Sounds kind of grim, doesn't it?

Well, there is some good news in the world of business. It's called SOHO, an acronym that covers a lot of ground. Small office/home office can mean anything from a solo freelance journalism operation running out of someone's basement office to a team

of managers, programmers, and sales staff running an Internet services business.

What's important is that the SOHO model works differently from the "traditional" business model, uses tools differently, and is able to—or must—leverage time, energy, and resources in new ways.

SOHO stats

First, some background. Here are some indicators of how the employment scene has changed in recent years.

Twenty years ago, almost 19 per cent of Canadians worked for various levels of government, while 11 per cent of us were self-employed. Today, over 15 per cent of us are self-employed, and only 14.6 per cent work for the government, according to Statistics Canada.

Andrew Jackson, senior economist with the Canadian Labour Congress, claims self-employment has created 75 per cent of the net gain in employment between 1990 and 1995.

A 1994 national survey of Canadian home-based entrepreneurs conducted by Elizabeth Harris (publisher, *Head Office At Home* magazine) found that:

- 65 percent of those responding were between the ages of 31 and 50;
- 72 percent have a university education;
- 35 percent have been in business for up to three years, and 27 percent have been in business four to ten years;
- 77 percent used their own income to start their business, and only 10 percent borrowed money from a bank or trust company.

Finally, according to a Canadian Federation of Independent Business study, 40 percent of small businesses in Canada in 1992 were operated by women. This was up from 30 percent in 1981.

Looking for answers

Well and good, you might say, but that's history and statistics, what about the future? What should SOHOs see when they look at

the business horizon?

Here are some answers. Not specifics, but trends that hold within them answers that can mean new business, repeat business, and an increase in the bottom line.

Answer one

In the 1969 film *The Graduate*, the one-word business advice given to Dustin Hoffman's character was "plastics." In the 1990s, the answer would be "solutions."

Manufacturers, developers, resellers, and knowledge workers understand that customers are willing to pay—and pay well—for the services of someone who can customize a product or service. It's an extension of the current passion for the personal trainer, someone who knows the customer well enough to build a solution that will meet the customer's particular needs.

The logical corollary is that those who simply sell "boxes," whether hardware, software, or a single service, are doomed to failure.

Answer two

Convergence is the dynamic that's running the business world. Whether it's the computer/TV hybrid, the marriage of banking and the Web, or even the uneasy alliance between Microsoft and Apple, things are coming together. That means that the state-of-the-art SOHO entrepreneur needs to position himself or herself across at least a couple of sectors and markets.

Not to say that the big vertical markets aren't still there. They are, and they're powerful. But, staying within a single vertical market requires a depth and strength of

continued on page 13

Every rose has its thorn

There are a lot of advantages to the SOHO (small office/home office) life, but it's not all flex-time and write-offs. During my years as a freelance editor, I've encountered several disadvantages to "being your own boss." Here's a (mostly) serious list of things to consider if you find yourself contemplating taking the plunge (or being pushed into the pool).

There's no escaping the office

Working where you live can make life seem very circumscribed. The boundaries of your life experience can shrink. Work can easily take over, muscle in on your "time off," and turn you into a hermit.

It's important to try to set limits. Be realistic about timelines. Don't drive yourself into the ground. And get out of the "office" as much as you can.

It's easy to goof off

Conversely, you're also surrounded by distractions. There's no one looking over your shoulder, and (hopefully) you've got the boss's indulgence. This can put you behind the eight-ball in no time flat.

Working at home takes discipline and perseverance in the face of danger (such as the burning need to alphabetize your CDs). Sometimes it's hard to buckle down and be productive. Once again, defined limits can help.

Your schedule may fluctuate

It's great to be able to work your own hours,

but there may be consequences. Personally, I like to work late at night (current time as I'm writing this: 1:47 a.m.), but keeping vampire's hours affects my ability to interact with others (business and personal), not to mention my chances to shop.

It can get lonely

Working by yourself for long hours can be disconcerting. You can feel cut off, isolated, unconnected to the ebb and flow of human relations. The office gossip is fairly dull, too.

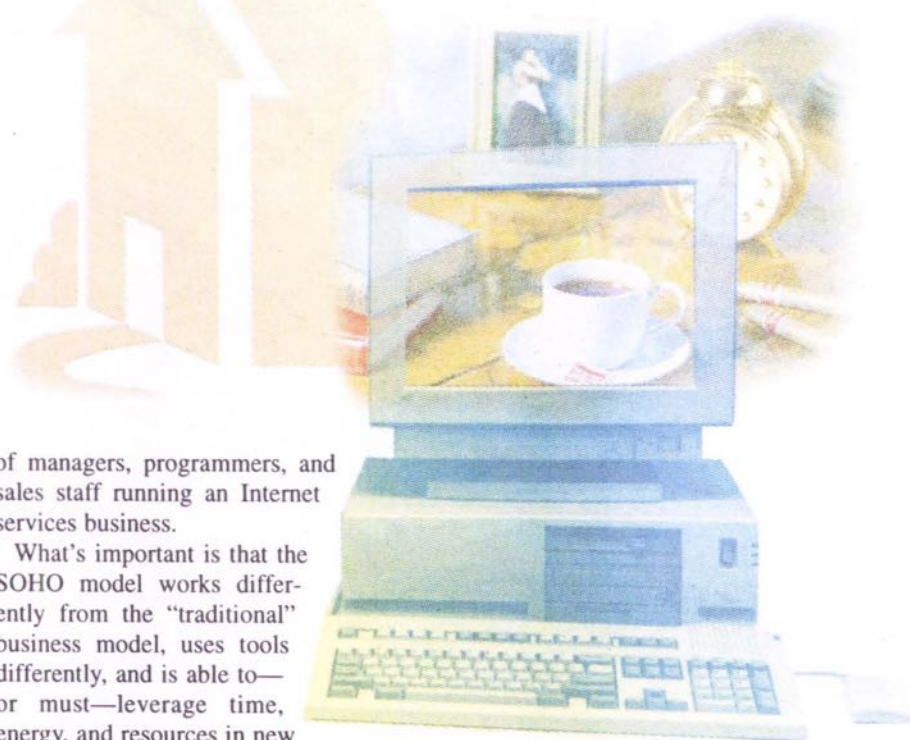
The Internet has created a number of avenues for SOHO workers to form associations (virtually), but the gregarious may still find it difficult.

Your situation can be misunderstood

As many have noted, the number of SOHO workers (voluntary or otherwise) is increasing, but there's still a lack of understanding from "traditional" working friends. Your being at home seems like an invitation for them to visit whenever they want. Your flexible schedule may encourage them to tempt you into socializing when you can't afford the time.

As well, the SOHO atmosphere can erase distinctions your "traditional" working friends take for granted. "Weekend" is often a meaningless word to me. "Vacation" is whatever unpaid downtime happens.

In the end, YMMV (your mileage may vary), as they say on the Net. Just remember: if you do take the plunge, be prepared to do some adjusting. —William A. Wood



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Seag 4.5/23GB Ultra SCSI 1199/3599
Removable Hard Drive kit..... 26

HD Controller

EIDE Controller \$27
Adaptec 1520/1522 SCSI ctrl 85/90
Adaptec 2940 SCSI ctrl 265
Adaptec 3940 SCSI ctrl 530

Zip/Floppy DRIVE

120MB Floppy Drive w/system \$179
1.44MB Floppy Drive 28
Zip 100M int./ext. 133/179
Zip disk / 120M Floppy disk 17/25
Jaz IG int/ext 392/515

UPS

APC 420 UPS 195

MEMORY

72pin 4M/ 8M EDO 28/35
72pin 16M/ 32M EDO 65/130
DIMM SDRAM 16M/32M 94/169
256/512K Pipeline Cache 20/40

CPU

Intel P150/166 148/199
Intel MMX 166/200/233 199/348/519
Intel Pro 180/200 329/678
AMD K6 166/200/233 188/299/448

MOTHERBOARDS

Pentium VXPro w/512KPB 89
Pentium TXPro w/ 512KPB 105
Pentium TX 512K PB 129
Pentium Pro FX 185
GigaByte VX 512K 138
ASUS VX 512K USB port 139
ASUS HX 512K USB port 175
ASUS TX 512K AT/ATX 205/210
ASUS KN97 Pentium II ATX 328
Intel Venus FX ATX 195

PRINTERS/ Scanner

Canon BJC240/4300 Inkjet 198/285
Epson Stylus 400/600 279/389
Brother HL730DX 600dpi 6p 429
Brother HL760DX 1200dpi 6p 529
Brother HL1660 1200dpi 17p 1355
Oki OL600e 415
HP LaserJet 6L 515
AcerScan 300F flatbed 259

MONITORS

14" Proview/AOC NI/LR \$199
14" Sceptre/TVM NI/LR 219
15" Proview/AOC NI/LR 275
15" Acerview NI/LR Digital 347
15" Sceptre NI/LR Digital PnP 337
15" Sony/Mag 0.25dp 518/468
17" Proview/Acerview Digital 549/599
17" Sceptre speaker & Microphone 599
17" ViewSonic GS/PS 749/919
17" Optquest V773/V775 699/795
17" Sony 200SX 878

PCI VIDEO CARD

Cirrus Logic 5446 1M/2M MPEG \$ 26/36
TV Tuner & Capture Card 99
Trident 9680 64bit 1M MPEG 32
Trident Pro 9685 64bit MPEG, TV 52
S3 Verge 3D MPEG 2M/4M 49/64
Diamond Stealth 3D 4M 115
ATI 3D Expression 2M/4M 69/119
ATI XPERT@Work 4M 199
ATI XPERT@Play 4M 239
Matrox Millennium II 4M 237
Matrox Mystique 220 4M 158

NETWORKING

Acer 16Bit ISA Ethernet full duplex 28
Acer 32Bit PCI Combo 34
Acer 32Bit PCI 10/100 Bus Master 79
Acer Ethernet Hub 9 ports 98
Ethernet cable RG58 10'/30' 7/12
Cable per ft Coax/RJ45 .17/22

CD-ROM

Toshiba/Panasonic 24x \$117
Acer 20x/24x 105/115
Pioneer 12x 85
NEC CD Writer 450
Ext CD kit/parallel 108
Recordable CD 6.9

SOUND CARD

Zoltrix 16bit PnP \$ 24
Acer 16bit PnP 3D 30
Acer AW35 PnP 3D wavetable 46
Sound Blaster PnP I6/32 63/99
Sound Blaster AWE 64 PnP 119
80W/240W Speakers 19/55
Microphone w/stand 9

FAX/MODEMS

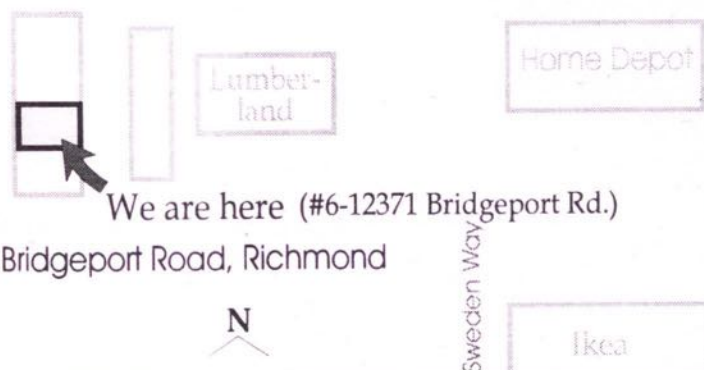
Zoltrix 33.6K FaxModem int \$57
Acer 33.6K Voice upgradable 79
Acer 56K Voice FaxModem 128
USR 33.6K FaxModem int 115
USR 56K FaxModem int 189
Cardinal 128K ISDN 249

Keyboard, Mouse & Misc.

Win95 Keyboard 18
Fujitsu Keyboard 28
Logitech 2B Mouse 16
Switch Box for 2 Printers 25

CASES

13"/15" Tower Case w/230w 39/39
19" ATX Tower Case w/230w 98
19"/24" Tower Case w/250w 88/120



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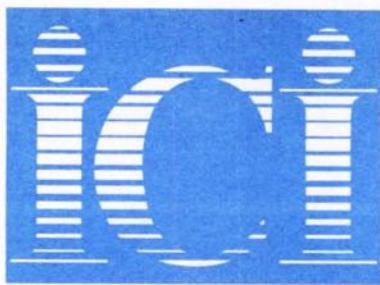
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Acer/USR 56K Int. Voice/ Fax/ Modem	\$128/198
Canon 4200SE Printer (w/system purchase)	\$288
Creative PC-DVD Kit	\$ 598
Sony OEM 74 min CD-R 1/10	\$5/45
Genius NetMouse (built-in scroll buttons)	\$18

Upgrade Your 386/486 to P-150

- Intel Pentium-150MHz CPU
- MMX Ready Motherboard w/ 512K PBC
- 16MB EDO RAM 60ns, exp. to 128MB
- PCI 64bit 1MB MPEG Video Card

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Multimedia Option: 12x CD-ROM + Acer 16bit 3D Sound + 60W Speakers +\$150

Cyrix MII-200 PowerPlus System

- Cyrix MII-200 CPU / 512K PB Cache M/B
- 16MB EDO RAM / 1.7GB E-IDE HDD
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Multimedia Option: 12x CD-ROM + Acer 16bit 3D Sound + 60W Speakers +\$150

All ICI Systems Come With 5-Year Labor & 2-Year Parts Warranty & 1 Month Free Internet Access!

MMX-166/200/233

- Pentium MMX 166/200/233MHz CPU
- 512K Pipeline Burst Cache
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- Fujitsu 1.44MB 3.5" FDD
- PCI 64bit 2MB MPEG Card
- 15" N-I L-R SVGA Monitor
- 104 (Windows 95) Keyboard
- Mid-size Tower Case
- Genius NetMouse + Pad
- EIDE 24x CD-ROM
- Acer FX-3D 16 PnP Sound
- 60W Amp. Stereo Speakers
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MMX-166 \$42/mo*

1288

MMX-200 \$46/mo*

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M-233 \$1628

Options: 32MB RAM (from 16M) +\$70 / 3.5G HD (from 2.5G) +\$60
Acer 33.6K VoiceModem +\$90 / Windows 95 (SR II) +\$120

Pentium II 233/266

- Pentium II (Klamath) 233/266MHz 512K Cache
- Intel Portland PD440FX M/B
- 32MB EDO RAM (Exp. to 128MB)
- 2.5GB E-IDE HDD (Mode 4)
- Fujitsu 1.44MB 3.5" FDD
- ATI 3D Xpn 2MB MPEG Card
- 15" N-I L-R SVGA Monitor
- 104 (Windows 95) Keyboard
- ATX Tower w/ 235W P/S
- Genius NetMouse + Pad
- EIDE 24x CD-ROM
- Soundblaster 16 PnP
- 60W Amp. Stereo Speakers

P-II-233 \$72/mo*

2238

P-II-266 \$79/mo*

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Options: 64MB RAM (from 32M) +\$135 / 4.3G HD (from 2.5G) +\$150
USR 56K VoiceModem +\$198 / Windows 95 (SR II) +\$120

Pentium-150/166/200

- Pentium 150/166/200MHz CPU
- MMX Ready M/B w/ 512K PBC
- 16MB EDO RAM (Exp. to 128MB)
- 1.7GB E-IDE HDD (Mode 4)
- Fujitsu 1.44MB 3.5" FDD
- PCI 64bit 2MB MPEG Card
- 14" N-I L-R SVGA Monitor
- 104 (Windows 95) Keyboard
- Mid-size Tower Case
- MS-Comp. 3B Mouse + Pad
- EIDE 24x CD-ROM
- Acer FX-3D 16 PnP Sound
- 60W Amp. Stereo Speakers
- Compton's Encyclopedia & 4 CD Titles

P-150 \$35/mo*

1078

P-166 \$37/mo*

1138

P-200 \$1198

Options: 32MB RAM (from 16M) +\$70 / 15" Monitor (from 14") +\$80
Acer 33.6K VoiceModem +\$90 / Windows 95 (SR II) +\$120

Pentium Pro 180/200

- Pentium Pro 180/200MHz / 256K Cache
- Intel 440FX Chipset ATX M/B
- 16MB EDO RAM (Exp. to 128MB)
- 2.5GB E-IDE HDD (Mode 4)
- Fujitsu 1.44MB 3.5" FDD
- ATI 3D Xpn 2MB MPEG Card
- 15" N-I L-R SVGA Monitor
- 104 (Windows 95) Keyboard
- ATX Tower w/ 230W CSA P/S
- Genius NetMouse + Pad
- EIDE 24x CD-ROM
- Soundblaster 16 PnP
- 60W Amp. Stereo Speakers

Pro-180 \$54/mo*

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Pro-200 \$63/mo*

1960

Options: 32MB RAM (from 16M) +\$70 / 3.5G HD (from 2.5G) +\$60
USR 33.6K VoiceModem +\$138 / Windows 95 (SR II) +\$120

K6 MMX 166/200/233

- AMD K6 MMX 166/200/233 MHz CPU
- 512K Pipeline Burst Cache
- 16MB EDO RAM (Exp. to 128MB)
- 2.1GB E-IDE HDD (Mode 4)
- Fujitsu 1.44MB 3.5" FDD
- PCI 64bit 2MB MPEG Card
- 15" N-I L-R SVGA Monitor
- 104 (Windows 95) Keyboard
- Mid-size Tower Case
- MS-Comp. 3B Mouse + Pad
- EIDE 24x CD-ROM
- Acer FX-3D 16 PnP Sound
- 60W Amp. Stereo Speakers
- Compton's Encyclopedia & 4 CD Titles

K6-166 \$41/mo*

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K6-200 \$44/mo*

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K6-233 \$1498

Options: 32MB RAM (from 16M) +\$70 / 2.6G HD (from 2.1G) +\$35
Acer 33.6K VoiceModem +\$90 / Windows 95 (SR II) +\$120

NoteBook

Lease Available

ACER-Extensa	
610CD P150 16M 1.4G 11.3DSTN 10X	\$2590
660CD P166MMX 16M 1.3G 12.1DSTN 10X	\$3768
660CDT P166MMX 16M 2.1G 12.1TFT 10X	\$4898
HITACHI-Vision Book	
P150 16M 1.4G 12.1DSTN 10X	\$3288
P166mmx 32M 2.1G 12.1TFT 10X 33.6K	\$4550
IBM-ThinkPad	
380D P150 16M 1.35G 12.1DSTN 8X	\$2738
380ED M166 16M 2.1G 20X 12.1DSTN	\$3398
380D P150mmx 16M 2.1G 12.1TFT 8X	\$5290
TOSHIBA	
220CDS P133 16M 1.35G 12.1DSTN 10X 2M-Video	\$2768
300CT P133MMX 32M 1.51G 1024x600TFT 33.6K	\$4728
440CDX P133MMX 16M 1.35G 12.1DSTN 10X	\$3298
440CDT P133MMX 16M 1.35G 12.1TFT 10X 33.6K	\$4098
460CDT P166MMX 32M 2.1G 12.1TFT 10X 33.6K	\$5290
PCMCIA / ADD-ONS	
3Com EtherLink III / FastEthernet TX 10/100	\$178/228
3Com 33.6K + 10BaseT Combo	\$398
Adaptec APA-1450 / APA-1460 Slim SCSI	\$148/238
Backpack CD-ROM Para. 8X / 8X w/Sound	\$328/398
GVC 33.6K PCMCIA Fax/Modem	\$218
MegaHertz XJ10BT 10Base T / XJ10BC Combo	\$147/178
MegaHertz XJ4336 33.6 / XJ4336M 33.6 Motorola-C	\$318/348
MegaHertz XJ1336 33.6 Modem 56K Upgradeable	\$288
Motorola Montana 33.6 Modem w/ Cell phone cable	\$280

CPU/RAM

30pin 1MB / 4MB	\$8/25
EDO 4 / 8 / 16 / 32M	\$25/35/68/135
DIMM 16M/ 32M SD(10ns)	\$98/168
AMD K6 MMX-166/200	\$218/318
Intel P150/P166/P200	\$148/198/298
Intel MMX-166/200/233	\$238/348/560
Intel Pentium II 233 / 266	\$788/988
Asus VX97 / TXP4 512K	\$138/208
Asus TX97 / ATX 512K	\$218/228
HT TX PRO / TX	\$95/115
Spacewalker 512K VX / TX	\$128/160
ASUS KN97X P-II M/B	\$318

Drives

Fujitsu 1.7G/2.1G/2.6G	\$208/228/248
JTS Champion 2.5G/3.0G	\$230/255
Quantum Ultra 2.1G/3.2G	\$248/308
Quantum Ultra 4.3G/6.4G	\$388/498
WD 2.1/ 2.5/ 3.1G	\$250/270/308
WD Ultra 4.3GB	\$398
Quantum 2.1G/3.2G SCSI	\$368/450
Quantum 4.3G/6.4G SCSI	\$498/668
Quantum 4.5/9G UWscsi	\$1048/1868

HDD Controllers

Adaptec 2940 SCSI/Ultra Kit	\$238/260
Adaptec 2940UW PCI SCSI Kit	\$318
Diamond Fireport 40UW scsi Kit	\$228

ZIP / JAZ Drive

100MB ZIP Drive Int. IDE	\$148
100MB ZIP Drive Ext. Para/SCSI	\$188
1GB JAZ Drive SCSI int./ext.	\$398/525
100MB ZIP Disc 1/10pcs	\$16/155
1GB JAZ Disc 1/3pcs	\$148/380
SyJet 1.5G SCSI Int./Ext.	\$435/600

Tape Backup

Ditto 2GB Int/Ext	\$188/238
Ditto 3.2GB Int/Ext	\$308/368
HP T2000 2.0GB Int/Ext	\$205/250
HP T3000 3.2GB Int/Ext	\$250/310
HP T4000 4.0GB Int/Ext	\$470/560
Traven TR1/TR3/TR4 Tape	\$38/40/55

Modems

Acer 33.6 Voice 56K Upgradeable	\$90
GVC 33.6 Full Duplex Voice Int	\$90
Motorola 56K Voice Int/Ext	\$198/228
USR 33.6 Int/Ext	\$118/198
USR 33.6 Voice Int/Ext	\$138/228
USR 56K Int/Ext	\$198/250
USR 56K Full Duplex Voice Int	\$198
USR Big Picture Video Kit	\$498
USR ISDN 128K Int	\$318

Multimedia

Panasonic 24x	\$128
Toshiba 12x / 24x	\$98/138
Pioneer 12x SCSI CD-ROM	\$148
Acer FX-3D 16bit PnP Sound	\$28
Soundblaster 16 / 32 PnP	\$60/108
SB AWE 64 Value/ Gold (Ret)	\$128/248
Yamaha M15 Stereo Speaker	\$78
Yamaha M10 SubWoofer	\$128
Labtec 3D Speaker & Subwoofer	\$148
60W/120W/180W Speaker	\$20/38/48

CD Writer

Panasonic 4x2 / 8x4 Int. Kit	\$530/780
HP SureStore 6020i/6020e	\$478/588
HP SureStore 6020ep Ext Para.	\$588
Yamaha 6x4 Int. / Ext.	\$648/798
Yamaha 6x4 Int. / Ext. kit	\$848/998
Sony OEM CD-Media 1/10pc	\$5/45

Power Protection

APC BackUps 280/450	\$145/250
APC Backup Pro 280/420	\$205/340
APC SmartUps 450/700	\$395/495
Network Surge Arrest 7 outlets	\$65

Printers

Color Printer	
Canon 240/240SE/250	\$208/218/218
Canon 4200/4200SE/4300	\$278/298/298
Canon BJC-4550 17"x11" Color	\$580
Epson 400/600/800	\$278/378/530
HP 400C/692C	\$248/378
HP DeskJet 820Cxi / 870C	\$348/540

Laser Printer	
Brother HL720 600dpi 6ppm	\$368
Brother HL730DX 600dpi 6ppm	\$448
Brother HL760DX 1200x600dpi	\$550

HP 6L 600dpi 6ppm 1MB	\$520
HP 6P/6PM 600dpi 8ppm	\$970/1260
HP 5 / 5N / 5M	\$1428/2028/2390
HP 4V/5Si/5SiMx	\$2480/3288/5150
HP 5M Color w/ 32MB	\$6789
Lexmark Optra 1650N	\$2198

Scanner	
HP ScanJet 5P / 4C	\$398/968
Microtek ScanmakerE3 Flatbed	\$278
Microtek Scnm. E6 Std/Pro	\$438/738
U-Max 6E Pro	\$798

Monitors

Proview 14" / 15" / 17"	\$205/270/540
MAG DX15T / D700T	\$468/908
NEC 15" C500 / M500	\$448/525
NEC 17" XV17+/M700	\$950/1038
Panasonic 17" S17	\$798
Samsung 15" GLe / GLi	\$438/488
Sceptre 15" / 17"	\$328/598
Sony 15" 100SX / 100SF	\$498/578
Sony 17" 200SX / 200SF	\$898/1038
Sony 17" SE2T 1600 x 1280	\$1228
Sony 20" 300SFT 1600 x 1280	\$1998
Viewsonic 15" Q53/GA	\$368/510
Viewsonic 17" V773 / V775	\$698/868
Viewsonic 17" 17A/17PS	\$868/928
Viewsonic 21" P810/815	\$1998/2468

Video Cards

CL 5446 (MPEG) PCI 1M/2M	\$28/38
S3 3D Virge 2M/4M	\$55/70
ATI 3D Xpn 2M / Xpn+ 4M	\$76/118
ATI 3D PC2TV 2M/4M	\$118/138
ATI ProTurbo PC2TV 4M/8M	\$188/238
ATI TV Tuner Card	\$138
ATI All-in Wonder 2M/4M	\$325/350
Diamond 3D 3400 4M VRAM	\$228
Diamond 3D Monster 4M EDO	\$238
Matrox Myst. 3D 2M/4M SG	\$138/178
Matrox Myst. 220 4M SG	\$168
Matrox Mill. 3D 2M/4M W	\$188/260
Matrox Mill. 3D II 4M/8M W	\$268/408

Networking

ISA / PCI Ethernet Combo	\$38/48
GVC Ethernet Combo ISA/PCI	\$55/68
3Com 3C509B PCI 10BT	\$110
3Com 3C905-TX PCI 10/100BT	\$99
10 BaseT HUBS	
D-Link 8/12/16 Port Hub	\$125/218/248
HP AdvanceStack 8 Port Hub	\$208
3Com SuperStack II 12/24	\$360/560
Network Software	
NT Server 4.0 5 / 10 User	\$999/1238
NT Station 4.0 upgrade/Full	\$248/380
NetWare 3.12 5/10 User	\$828/1688
NetWare 4.1 5/10 User	\$828/1688

Print Servers	
HP JetDirect J2550B RJ45	\$428
HP JetDirect EX Plus3 RJ45/BNC	\$550

Multi-Linguals

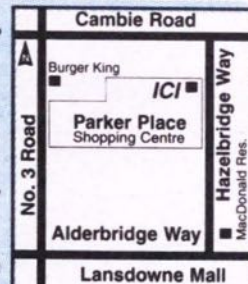
Dragon Writer Chinese/Japanese	\$278
Chinese Gateway & 3x3 Pen	\$348
FineArt GoGo 6x4 Pen System	\$288
TwinBridge ChinesePartner 4.0	\$278

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Feature

SOHO trends

continued from page 8

resources that only a large company can provide, the SOHO can be successful in the maelstrom that convergence brings by being adaptable, nimble, and aggressive.

Answer three

Once again, we're talking about size and speed. Or, more accurately, about access and mobility. Small and fast only matters if it serves the bottom line. Otherwise, it's just a red flag for larger predators. That means that the successful SOHO must be mobile and instantly accessible to customers.

Do you respond to email messages from your customers within four hours? Six? Any slower, and you're liable to be forgotten in a world that moves so fast. Do you have a cell phone? A pager? Do you use them? If not, you're going to be consigned to the tired category of those who may take a couple of days to respond to voice messages and lose business in the process.

For good or ill, the business world is moving faster than ever, and access and mobility mean a lot.

Answer four

Tools here are some new hardware and software options that will support the SOHO in responding to the above trends.

Because they're always at hand, a palmtop or handheld computer can give you the information you need when you need it—not later, when you've returned to your office and taken the time to boot up your desktop system. The best ones come from Psion, Philips, and Hewlett Packard.

Another new tool is a SOHO-sized postage meter (and optional electronic weigh scale) that's replenishable via phone (no more lugging the box down to the post office!), from Pitney Bowes. It is inexpensive to run, and you can create your own ads on your business mail!

With email merging software, you can design an e-mail campaign with a series of timed messages personalized with your prospect's name, address, and so on. This is not "spam" (unwanted mass mailings), but a legitimate follow-up to a customer's inquiry about your product or service, and a good way to nurture your customer before following up with a voice call or personal visit.

Change? Not a problem. With the right attitude, the right tools, and a little luck, change is something that brings opportunities, not hassle, to the SOHO world. ♦

GIVE SOMEONE A SECOND CHANCE.

Discuss organ donation with your family and sign a donor card today.



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Alan Thwaites is a freelance journalist who specializes in mobile computing and online technologies. He can be reached at nomad@praxcomm.com.

Site seeing:

Mobilis Palmtop Computing magazine,
<http://www.volksware.com/mobilis>

Pitney Bowes, <http://www.pitneybowes.com>
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The Place to Build Your Own Box

Intel Pentium 133

- ✓ Pentium-133MHz CPU
- ✓ Intel Triton II Chipset/512k PB Cache
- ✓ 16MB EDO 72pin RAM
- ✓ 1.2GB EIDE (mode4) Hard Drive
- ✓ PCI SVGA 1MB Video Card (exp. to 2MB)
- ✓ 1.44 MB 3.5" Floppy Drive
- ✓ 14" NI L/R SVGA Monitor
- ✓ Mid-Tower Case / 230 W Power
- ✓ 104 Key Win95 Keyboard
- ✓ Qtronix Lynx90 2B Mouse

Sale Price:

\$925

*P120 / P150 / P166 / P200

\$895 / 945 / 975 / 1,005

*Pentium166 MMX: \$995

*Pentium200 MMX: \$1,125

One Month Free Internet with New Systems

Upgrade Options:

- 14" → 15" / 17" Monitor \$90 / 260
- 33.6 Fax/Data/Voice Modem \$65

Intel Pentium 166 MMX

- ✓ Pentium-166MHz CPU w/MMX Technology
- ✓ Intel Triton II Chipset/512k PB Cache
- ✓ 16MB EDO 72pin RAM
- ✓ 1.6GB EIDE (mode4) Hard Drive
- ✓ PCI SVGA 2MB Video Card/.MPEG
- ✓ 1.44 MB 3.5" Floppy Drive
- ✓ 15" NI L/R SVGA Monitor
- ✓ Mid-Tower Case / 230 W Power
- ✓ 16x EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- ✓ Sound Blaster 16 PnP / 80W Stereo Speaker
- ✓ 33.6k Int.Voice Fax / Modem/Microphone
- ✓ 104 Key Win95 Keyboard
- ✓ Microsoft Ver2 / Logitech Mouse

Sale Price:

\$1,335

*P133 / P150 / P166 / P200 / P200MMX

\$1265 / 1285 / 1315 / 1345 / 1465

*AMD K6 166 MMX: \$1,325

*AMD K6 200 MMX: \$1,455

- 16MB → 32MB / 64MB EDO RAM \$65 / 195
- 1.6 → 2.0 / 3.0 / 4.0 / 6.4GB \$30 / 60 / 140 / 240
- 16x / 24x CD-ROM Driver \$100 / 130
- Microsoft Home CD pack \$80
- Windows95 / MS Office97 \$120 / 420

Storage Devices

Hard Drives:

- WD 1.6 / 2.1 GB \$245 / 270
- WD 2.5/3.1/4.0 GB \$285/310/400
- WD 5.1GB UIDE \$510
- Maxtor 3.2 / 4.3GB \$285 / 355
- Quantum 2.5 / 3.2GB \$265 / 300
- Quantum 1.2 / 2.1GB SCSI \$315 / 350
- Quantum ST3.2/4.3/6.4 \$295/355/470
- Seagate 3.3 / 6.0GB \$330 / 620
- Seagate2.1/2.15GB USCSI \$455 / 690
- Seagate4.3/4.5GUWSCSI \$1110/1250

Backup / JAZ / ZIP Drivers:

- Colorado T3000 int./ext. \$220 / 300
- Colorado T4000 int./ext. \$450 / 530
- Ditto 2GB int/ext. \$205 / 245
- ZIP 100MB Drive Parol/SCSI \$190
- JAZ 1GB SCSI int / ext. \$395 / 515

SCSI Contraller:

- Adaptec 2920 / 2940 \$190 / 255
- Adaptec 2940U / 2940UW \$275 / 320
- Adaptec 3940U / 3940 UW \$465 / 490

Networks

- Powercom ISA BNC Network Card \$35
- Powercom PCI BNC Network Card \$45
- 3COM PCI3C900 / 905 \$95 / 95
- 3COM PCI3C900 Comb \$125
- Intel Pro10+ PCI 10BT \$95
- ASUS T2P4 HX 512K PBC \$185
- ASUS TX97 512K PBC \$215
- ASUS P6NP5 Pro \$290
- TYAN Tomcat III Dual-Pentium \$265
- Intel PD440FX ATX (P-II) \$305

Notebooks

- IBM ThinkPad:
 - 380 P150/16M/1.08G/12.1DSTN \$2480
 - 380D P150/16M/1.35G/12.1DSTN/8x \$2750
 - 560E P150MMX/16M/2.1G/12.1TFT \$3580
- TOSHIBA:
 - 220CDS P133/16M/1.3G/11.3DSTN/10x \$2680
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Balancing act: Feng Shui for your work space

BY S.J. ROSS

Feng Shui, the 5,000-year-old Chinese practice of arranging your living space is increasingly being adopted by businesses in search of a livable office environment.

"Feng Shui [pronounced "fung shwe" or "fung shoy"] is practical and physical and esoteric and mystical," says Malca Narrol, Feng Shui consultant and teacher. "It is the study of people and place, it is the Chinese art of designing harmonious environments, it is a way of setting up space to work well and feel right and suit the person who is using it."

In essence, Feng Shui, which literally translates as "mild wind, warm sun, clear water, lush tree," is the art of designing a space—such as an office—to balance yin and yang and the five elements of water, wood, fire, earth, and metal. Ultimately, when the elements in an office are balanced, the room becomes a comfortable, productive environment.

"People who work at home are in charge of themselves," says Narrol. "They are motivating themselves, creating goals, creating vision, and the environment can help with that or distract from that."

Get the balance right

To balance the elements, Feng Shui uses a nine-square grid to classify room space as one of the essential qualities of life.

Clockwise, the squares are:

1. Knowledge and education in the corner made by the entrance and left walls.
2. Superiors, mentors, employees in the middle of the left wall.
3. Wealth in the corner made by the left and back walls.
4. Reputation in the center of the back wall.
5. Relationships in the corner made by the back and right walls.
6. Creativity in the middle wall of the right wall.
7. Helpful people, such as friends and clients, in the corner made by the entrance and right walls.
8. Career in the centre of the entrance wall.
9. Health and energy is in the center of the room.

Based on this grid, you can find and correct problem areas, and enhance the important aspects of your work.

For example, if you cannot save money, and if there is a garbage can in the space that represents wealth, you can rectify this problem by moving the garbage can to a space that is less important to you.

On the more common-sense side, Feng Shui principles also range from placing your office in a space filled with light, air, a pleasant feeling, and an enjoyable view, ensuring that practical considerations—from comfort to placement—are ideal for your needs, positioning office furnishings and items so you never have to uncomfortably contort your body, and minimizing clutter and disorganization.

"The importance of Feng Shui is vast," says Narrol. "It is very much in line with

modern trends of cocooning, looking for harmony, being more aware of spirit. It is very

much in line for people taking more responsibility for themselves and their work lives.

And it is about making your environment conducive to you and your success." ♦

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Ergonomic excesses?

Many a manufacturer has jumped onto the ergonomic bandwagon, but their products can still be problematic, says ergonomic specialist Anne Duffy.

The NoHands Mouse by Hunter Digital, for example, replaces the more traditional mouse with two ten-inch foot pedals. One controls the cursor, the other generates mouse clicks. While it does eliminate the risk of wrist injury, Duffy notes it does so by transferring the risk to the ankles.

Then there is the Hugger Duo Back chair from Grahl Industries. The back has a split down the middle, aimed at reducing spinal strain and encouraging correct posture. But Duffy notes, "you have enough muscle in the spinal region that this isn't an irritating factor," and "more importantly, you want curvature in the chair to support the lumbar region of the back."

Soft wrist rests, such as the Wrist Rat, can be problematic too. Designed to resemble a rat, it is said to "alleviate wrist discomfort from prolonged computer mouse usage." But, according to Duffy, soft rests may encourage an extended wrist position, which compresses the carpal tunnel. This may encourage you to move the mouse with smaller muscles in the hand instead of the larger, stronger arm muscles. It may also encourage wrist deviation, which can irritate the carpal tunnel.

"We are not encouraging wrist rests," Duffy says. "No matter what kind."

On the bright side, however, the Ontario inventor who developed the Wrist Rat says "you can stroke your Wrist Rat and it may help to relieve some stresses."—S.J. Ross

Contact:

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BY S.J. ROSS

We love our computers. We love banging the keys, clicking the mouse, and watching the monitor. We love computing speed and access and power. But we hate RSI (repetitive strain injury).

RSI is an umbrella term for injuries generally caused by repetitive motion or static holding (stiffly maintaining an unnatural position). Carpal tunnel syndrome, for example, is an RSI that occurs when the carpal tunnel, a narrow space in the wrist containing tendons, nerves, and blood vessels, becomes stressed by repetitive finger movement and bent wrist posture. And tendinitis (a sore muscle) is caused by static holding and overuse.

RSIs also include stiff shoulders caused by a rigid position, eye strain due to poor lighting, back strain resulting from poor posture, and more. And with, according to the Ontario Worker's Compensation Board, an increase of more than 32 per cent of reported cases of carpal tunnel syndrome from 1990 to 1993, RSI is clearly a growing concern.

What is a small office / home office (SOHO) worker to do? Combating RSI requires ergonomic computer accessories and office furnishings, good posture and work habits, and frequent stretching breaks.

The two most critical ergonomic computer accessories are the keyboard and mouse. Purchase items that require a minimum of effort, encourage relaxed posture, and promote a straight wrist.

Product posturing

Three excellent choices are the Microsoft Natural Keyboard (\$139), the Logitech MouseMan (US\$49.95), and the Cirque Glidepoint Wave Keyboard (US\$129).

Beating RSI

Ergonomic accessories to ease the pain

The wave-shaped Microsoft keyboard has a triangular space in the middle, positioning approximately half of the major keys on the right and half on the left to encourage comfortable, natural shoulder and wrist placement. The three-button MouseMan, with its gently rounded shape, comfortably cradles the palm and fingers and is easy to maneuver. And the Cirque keyboard offers both an ergonomic wave shape and a built-in trackpad—a flat mousing device that allows you to move your cursor by moving your finger on the trackpad and generate mouse clicks by tapping the trackpad or the mouse buttons.

Whatever accessories you choose, maintain a 90-degree elbow angle, keep your wrist straight, relaxed and not resting on any surface as you type, hold the mouse gently, and rely on the arm to move the mouse.

Now that you have your two most important ergonomic computer accessories, let's look at ergonomic computer furnishings.

According to Anne Duffy, ergonomist with Human Factors North Inc., the most important SOHO ergonomic items are a multitask chair, articulate keyboard and mouse surface, document holder, and anti-glare screen.

The key feature in an office chair is adjustability. It should be height adjustable with a height and tilt adjustable back rest, and, if required, adjustable chair arms. Both ObusForme and Herman Miller Canada offer a range of adjustable ergonomic chairs.

Sit comfortably

Once you have purchased your chair, position it so your keyboard is at elbow level and your feet are flat on the floor. If necessary, purchase a non-slip foot rest that allows you to swivel your feet up and down.

Next, you can purchase a shelf that simply slides in and out from under your desk, or you can purchase an articulate (adjustable for height and tilt) arm.

While Duffy recommends a shelf for people who predominately interact with the desk because it "provides clearance for the knees," she recommends that heavy computer users use an articulate arm wide enough to hold both keyboard and mouse.

But what if you have separate keyboard and mousing options and your existing keyboard arm is not wide enough to house your mouse?

Purchase an articulate mouse arm and position it as near as your keyboard as possible to avoid straining your shoulder when reaching for your mouse.

The Details line from Steelcase has a good selection of both keyboard and mouse arms.

If you frequently refer to documents as you type, purchase a document holder to hold documents at monitor level. Duffy recommends holders that are "height adjustable, large enough to accommodate your paper, and has a clip and bottom lip."

Sore eyes and headaches are clear indications of eye fatigue, but because poor light may encourage you to sit awkwardly to avoid glare, a stiff back or neck may also indicate a lighting problem.



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Bad lighting blues

Beyond purchasing task lighting to illuminate your desk with minimum glare, you should position your monitor so it is away from the window. However, many awkward SOHO offices dictate the placement of the monitor in a less than ideal location. The next best solution is an anti-glare

screen to cut harsh light reflected on your monitor.

Duffy also recommends frequent short stretching breaks. This, in conjunction with ergonomic furnishings and accessories, and maintaining a natural, relaxed posture, is your best bet to avoid the hurt of RSI. ♦

S.J. Ross, independent corporate, marketing, employee, and public-relations writer and consultant for an extensive portfolio of corporate and government clients, can be reached at sj.ross@guildnet.org.

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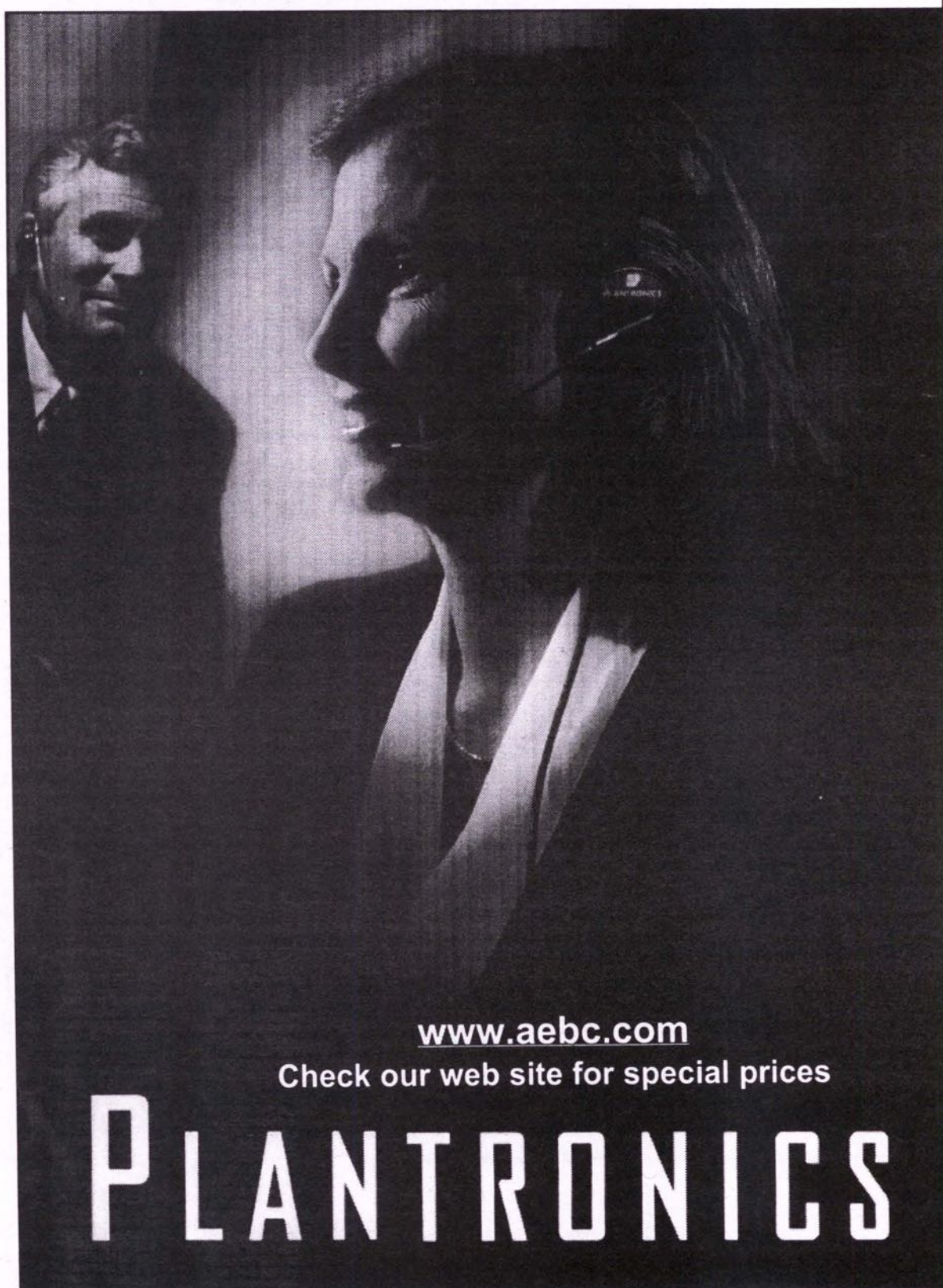
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PLANTRONICS

Mac server hacked, new challenge issued

BY LEE LESTER

Hackers have finally succeeded in breaking into a

World Wide Web site running on Apple's Macintosh operating system. But, say the Swedish organizers of the Crack-a-Mac challenge, it was

only because the hackers used a security hole in third-party software for remote administration, database access, and other functions.

The successful hacker will receive the 100,000 kroner (\$17,650) prize offered by Infinit Information AB, based near Malmo, in southern Sweden.

The leak was plugged within 24 hours. But Infinit says, as the Mac OS itself was not breached, another Kr.100,000 prize is still open to anyone who can break in before the contest closes on October 15.

Hackers were unsuccessful in penetrating the site in an earlier contest organized by Infinit. They also failed to get into Mac sites in challenges sponsored by companies in Vancouver and the United States. Both, like the first Swedish challenge, featured straight-from-the-box Mac operating systems.

The latest challenge featured far more sophisticated third-party server software that used Internet software developer Blue World Communications' Lasso to tie together WebSTAR and FileMaker Pro. Blue World, admitting the existence of a security hole in its software, issued a patch a day after the break-in. Another company, Pacific Coast, is also reported to have updated its SiteEdit line to foil a similar breach.

According to Blue World president/CEO Bill Doerrfeld: "This patch, along with changes currently being made to other Mac OS Internet products, restores the Mac OS platform to a position it has held for over two years as the most secure and easiest-to-maintain platform for Web serving."

"The presence of this hole combined with how other products handled security contributed to someone 'winning' the Crack a Mac Web site security challenge. By using an obscure and previously unknown method, a remote visitor was able to point Lasso to serve a lightly protected password file used by another vendor's product. This product relied upon yet another product's undocumented (in its API specification) approach which protects certain files through file modification. Prior to the security patch, Lasso did not support this little-used approach. By gaining access to the lightly protected password file, someone was easily able to use that vendor's product to log in and edit the contents of a Web page, thereby successfully cracking the Web server."

"Blue World has volunteered to pay the full amount of the challenge prize (approximately US\$12,000) to the party who discovered the hole."

Plugging the leak

Says Doerrfeld, "We feel that volunteering to pay the prize money was the right thing to do no matter how many products were involved. We also are delighted that this enabled this important competition to quickly get back on track. The Lasso security patch Blue World provided the host for the competition allowed them to immediately renew the competition, now more secure than ever."

"The recent Crack a Mac security breach has inspired much closer examination of obscure methods for compromising security on a Web server," Doerrfeld says. "A number of products have already been identified as containing holes either similar or exactly the same in scope and effect as the flaw recently discovered and fixed in our Lasso product. ♦"

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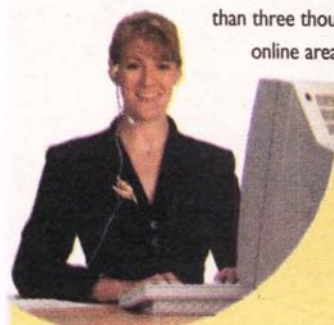
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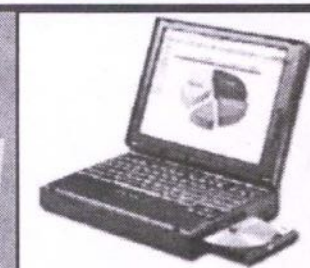
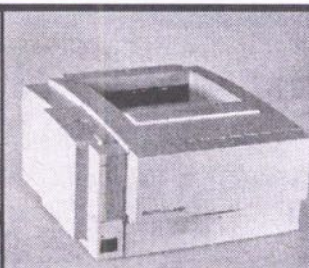


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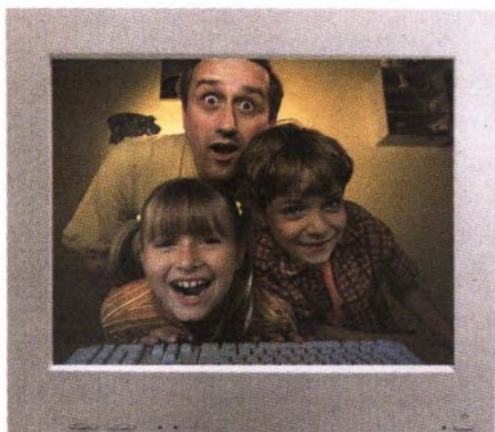
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FIDO competition coming

By the end of the year, FIDO is going to have to share its territory with the new digital PCS dog on the block, Clearnet.

Clearnet's product, MIKE, will be launched nationally later this year, according to Clearnet's regional manager for business

development, Rich Christiaan. He says reception in B.C. will be possible in the Lower Mainland, on the Island and in the Interior.

He declined to reveal the expected price of MIKE, but says "It will be affordable; there's no contract required, and it'll be simple to learn and use."

FIDO's service is currently available in an area ranging from North Vancouver to Beach Grove, as well as in the TriCity area.

Prompt expansion to the rest of the Lower Mainland is anticipated; coverage of Chilliwack, Whistler and Victoria is expected by April.

A FIDO handset runs between \$175 and \$350; the service costs \$40 for 400 minutes of air time per month. No contract is required.

PCS is a digital phone service that allows users to send and receive short email messages. It also offers more privacy than regular analogue cellular phone service.

—June Campbell

Web site: <http://www.clearnet.com>
Tel: 888-CLEARNET.

Web site: <http://www.fido.ca>
Tel: 604-683-3436.

Apple's got the Power

Apple Computer Inc. announced that it is acquiring Power Computing Corporation's core assets in a deal valued at \$100 million in Apple common stock.

Power Computing will retain its name and has stated it will sell Mac OS compatible computers through Dec. 31, 1997. Apple will provide ongoing Mac OS support to Power Computing customers and Power Computing will continue to provide hardware and warranty service to its customers.

Web site: <http://www.apple.ca>

Cool cases

If you need a carrying case for your digital camera, be sure to check out Targus. Available models include the Kosin Case (\$79.95) and Nylon Case (\$109.95), both of which feature adjustable, self-adhering foam-padded dividers and lots of pockets.

Web site: <http://www.targus.com>
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Aimed at the young (and young at heart), DinoMight Baseball from Microforum combines the popularity of dinosaurs with baseball. It includes various teams and stadiums, a practice mode, extensive gameplay and difficulty options, as well as high-detailed graphics. It has a suggested retail price is \$29.95.

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Laptop roundup

New portables close in on desktop power

BY LYNN GREINER
& SANDRA MINGAIL

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Apple PowerBook 1400 C133
AST Ascentia A60
Compaq Armada 7730MT
Dell Latitude LM P166ST
Digital HiNote Ultra 2000
Eurocom 6200
HP OmniBook 2000CT
IBM ThinkPad 380
NEC Versa 6200MX
Toshiba Satellite 220CDS

Every year, the difference between notebook and desktop computer power gets narrower and narrower, as manufacturers figure out how to shrink components, stretch battery life, and shoehorn the muscle of a desktop into a form you can carry around. This year is no different. The selection of notebook computers we looked at is a small fraction of what's available, and even the least expensive can cope with the most demanding appli-

cation software.

As you can see from the prices, we looked at two distinct categories of machine: the consumer-oriented, under-\$5,000 variety, and—just so you can see what the extra money will get you—a few high-priced, turbo-charged wonders.

The base hardware configurations have changed from last year, with 16 MB RAM the norm, and hard drives up to 2.1 GB. The predominant pointing device is a touchpad, and screens tend to measure over 12 inches, and offer at least 800x600 resolution. Audio capabilities are standard, as are two PC Card (PCMCIA) slots. With the exception of



the Apple, which runs MacOS, all of the machines come with Windows 95. Some also offer the option to install a different operating system, although it's more likely to be Windows NT than Windows 3.1, these days.

Angel 5600E Performer

Estimated price: \$3,599

This machine is, as its name suggests, loaded. It has a 200 MHz CPU, 12.1 inch display, 32 MB RAM, 2.1 GB hard drive, and 11x CD-ROM drive. The pointing device is a touchpad. This machine allows concurrent use of a hard drive, floppy drive, and CD-ROM drive. Its bundled software, the Cyber 7 CD Pak, and

inclusion of a speedy fax/modem makes it a value purchase. Performance was good, although the machine did have a tendency to crash on occasion. Slightly more bulky to transport than other models reviewed. Standard one-year warranty.

Apple PowerBook 1400C

Price: \$3,899

This is relatively light 5.5 lb., medium-powered system with a 133 MHz PowerPC processor, 16 MB RAM, and 1 GB hard drive. Its 11.3 inch backlit active matrix display provides reasonable quality, and has both brightness and contrast controls. The keyboard is quite decent, and the one-button touchpad is comfortably placed on the palmrest. An expansion bay holds either the floppy drive, or the 6x CD-ROM drive. Battery life is rated at two to four hours (we got about three).

Software includes Claris Works, the Apple Internet connectivity kit, telecommunications software, Claris Organizer, and several utilities.

continued on page 26

Anitec Computer

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- *8XCDrom & 16bit stereo sound
- *33.6k voice fax/modem
- *80w stereo speakers & Mic.
- *104 keyboard & mouse & pad
- *14" .28dpi Svcga color monitor

Cyrix166+-\$1049 Cyrix200+\$0000

P150-\$1150 P166-\$1229

P200-\$1380 MMX166-\$1239

MMX200-\$1389 MMX233-\$1589

K6-200-\$1385

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- *Intel Pentium processor
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- *Quantum/WD 3.2Gb U/Eide Drive
- *Panasonic 1.44mb floppy drive
- *Panasonic 24x EIDE CDrom
- *Sound Blaster AWE64 3D PnP
- *Internal 56k voice fax/modem
- *80w stereo speakers & Microphone
- *104 keyboard & logitech mouse
- *15" color digital SVGA monitor

MMX166-\$1815 MMX200-\$1950

MMX233-\$2150 PII 233-\$2620

PII 266-\$2830 K6-166-\$1810

K6-200-\$1949 K6-233-\$2069

ACT SuperPro Series

PII 233-\$3680 lease \$119/m

- *Professional tower case
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Support new USB devices
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- *64mb Edo Ram(up to 256mb)
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- *Quantum/WD 3.2Gb Eide Hdrive
- *Panasonic 1.44mb floppy drive
- *Panasonic 24x CDrom
- *Sound Blaster AWE64 3D
- *USR 56k X2 int. voice fax/modem
- *Stereo speakers with Sub & Mic.
- *PS2 Windows 104 keyboard
- *PS2 Logitech mouseman
- *Viewsonic 17PS .25dpi monitor

Pro150-\$2920 Pro180-\$3080

Pro200-\$3380 Dual Pro-\$call

Pentium II 233MHz \$3680

Pentium II 266MHz \$3898

Acer Open Series

MMX200-\$2098 lease \$68/m

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- *Acer MMX motherboard
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512k Pipelined cache
- *Intel Pentium processor
- *32mb Edo Ram(up to 256Mb)
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- *3.4Gb Ultra IDE Hard Drive
- *1.44mb floppy drive
- *Acer 24xCDrom & AW32 3D sound
- *Acer 56k voice fax/modem
- *80w stereo speakers & Microphone
- *Acer Ergonomic keyboard/mouse
- *Acer 15" Svcga color monitor

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MMX233-\$2298 P II 233-\$2788

K6-200-\$2098 K6-233-\$2219

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3D Stereo sound card
Power stereo speakers & Mic.
33.6K data/voice/fax/modem
Windows keyboard & mouse
15" color digital monitor

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HP670/692 \$279/369
HP6L/6P \$539/989
HP5P/4C scanner \$399/939
Canon 250/4300 \$199/279
Epson 400/600 \$289/389
Brother 730/760 \$479/579
Lexmark Optra S from \$1549
Acer scanner 300/600 \$289/489

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SONY 15sx/sf \$499/595
ADI 15/17 .26dpi \$369/679

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Viewsonic 17PS \$859

VIDEO CARD

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PC2TV 3D 2/4m \$109/139
Mystique 220 4m \$159
Millennium 2/4m \$175/229
Millennium II 4M(box) \$309

MULTIMEDIA

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SB16/32/64 \$59/105/118

SPECIAL

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FAX/MODEM

USR int. 33.6/56k voi.\$130/199
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Netcommander ISDN \$320
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Asus 512k VX/TX \$139/209

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SPECIAL

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FIC PA2007 1Mb \$149

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EDO:8/16/32MB-\$38/64/128

DIMM:16/32MB-\$79/149

SDRAM:16/32MB-\$99/158

64MB-\$339

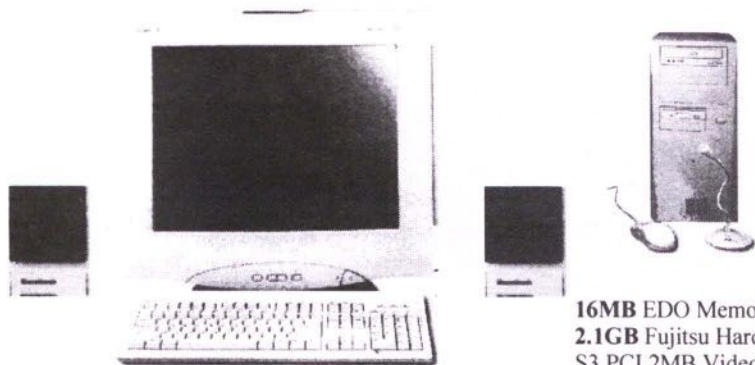
HARD DISK DRIVE

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SCSI 1.2/2.1/3.2-\$309/369/439
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\$249/269/299/359
Fujitsu:1.7/2.1/2.5/3.5G \$219/235/245/289

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AMD K5-133 ...\$1129
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AMD K6-200 MMX ...\$1369
IBM 6x86-PR166+ ...\$1129
Intel Pentium 133MHz ...\$1158
Intel Pentium MMX-166 ...\$1219
Intel Pentium MMX-200 ...\$1399

Option:

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Lotus SmartSuite ...\$59
Canon Color Printer ...\$189

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1.44M FDD
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MiniTower w/CSA PS
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Mouse & Pad
14" Digital SVGA Monitor

PR90 ...\$799
PR100 ...\$836
PR133 ...\$859
PR 166+ ...\$849

Options:

MS-Windows 95 ...+\$119
MS-Home Bundle ...+\$89
33.6K Fax Modem
& Sound Card ...+\$99

At the price of a 486 or 5x86 computer, This system allow you to enjoy the Pentium's true 32 bit power with the potential of upgrading up to a P-200 CPU.

PowerStation

AMD K6 200 MMX **\$1629**

K6 166 MMX \$1499
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Panasonic 1.44M FDD
Panasonic 24x CD ROM
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USR 56K Voice/Fax/Modem
Sound Blaster AWE64 Sound Card
Powersonic HX 19" Tower
Fujitsu Keyboard & Logitech Mouse

Option:

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Canon BJC-4100 ...+\$239
15" TTX Pro Monitor...+\$359

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MMX-200 ...\$1239
MMX-233 ...\$1499

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S3 Virge 3D Video Card 4M
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Panasonic 24x CD ROM
Acer 33.6K Voice/Fax/Modem
Powersonic MX Tower
Fujitsu Keyboard
Logitech mouse

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Pentium II 233 ...\$2638
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Panasonic 24x CD ROM
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USR 56K Voice/Fax/Modem
SoundBlaster AWE64 Sound Card
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Fujitsu Keyboard & MS-mouse

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Windows NT ...+\$229
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200MHz ...\$989

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PCI Video Card 1M MPEG
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Mitsumi Win95 Enhanced Keyboard
Mouse & Pad

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& Sound Card ...+\$99
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MAG 15" .28 ...\$449
NEC M500/M700 15"/17" 0.25 ...\$529/1026
Hitachi 15"/17" ...\$428/735
Sceptre .28 14"/15"/17" ...\$259/339/599
.26dp 17" ...\$649
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17" 200SX/SF 0.25dpi ...\$930/1170
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TTX Professional 15" .28 ...\$379
Professional 17" .28/26 7785S ...\$649/759
Professional 21" .28/26 ...\$1388/1998
ViewSonic 15GS/17GS ...\$460/790
17PS/PT770 ...\$919/988
21PS .25dp 21" ...\$2345

Motherboard

ABIT VX/HX/TX CPU PnP...\$129/179/159
ASUS VX97/TX97 ...\$135/209
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Intel Triton 430VX PCI/512K ...\$119
Intel 430TX MB w/512K ...\$129
Intel i440FX PCI/Petium Pro ...\$199
Pentium Triton III 512K K5/K6/MMX ...\$89
Intel Pentium II ATX, Audio ...\$399

CPU

AMD K5-75/90/100/133 ...\$49/59/89/109
AMD K6-166/200/233 ...\$199/299/439
Pentium MMX-166/200/233...\$219/359/539

Memory

4/8/16/32MB 60nS EDO ...\$29/39/69/142
16/32MB 168pin SDRAM ...\$99/172

Video Cards

ATI 3D Xpres. 2M ...\$75
ATI 3D Xpres.+ 2M(up)/4M ...\$89/119
ATI 3D Xpres.+ PC2TV 2M/4M ...\$108/139
ATI 3D Pro Turbo PC2TV 4M/8M ...\$179/239
ATI TV Tuner ...\$149
Cirrus Logic 5436/5446 MPEG 1M ...\$26/32
Diamond Stealth 3D 2M ...\$118
Matrox Millennium 2/4M WRAM ...\$142/182
Matrox Millennium II 4/8M ...\$279/439
Matrox Mystique II 2M/4M SG ...\$129/169
S3 Trio 64V+ w/MPEG 1M/2M ...\$32/42
S3 ViREG 3D 4M ...\$65
Trident 9685 PC2TV 1M ...\$59

Modem/Network

Acer 33.6K w/Voice Fax SVD ...\$99
USRobotics 33.6K Voice FaxModem ...\$129
USRobotics 56K Fax/Voice ...\$188/195
Supra 33.6K Voice/Sprk Phone/Fax ...\$76/156
Ethernet Card ISA/PCI ...\$29/39

CDROM

Acer CD ROM 12/16/20/24x ...\$79/89/102/122
Panasonic CD 8x/12x/24x ...\$86/96/129
GoldStar External 8x CD parallel port ...\$219
Sony/Pioneer SCSI 12X CDROM ...\$139
CD Writer ...\$489

SoundCard

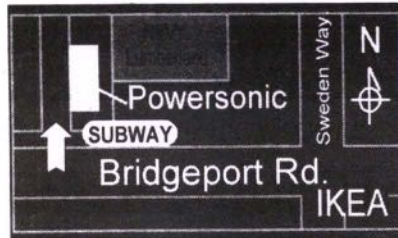
Acer AWE 32 Pro Sound Card ...\$46
Sound Blaster 16/AWE64 ...\$65/116
ESS/Ziptrix/Opti 16Bit 3D Full Duplex ...\$22
YAMAHA 3D PnP Full Duplex ...\$29.50

Hard Drive

Champ 1.3/2.0/2.5/3.0 ...\$178/228/249/279
Fujitsu 1.7/2.1/2.57/3.5GB ...\$219/249/279/329
Western Digital
1.6/2.1/2.5/3.1/4.3G ...\$232/259/279/299/389
Quantum Ultra ST
2.1/3.2/4.3/6.4GB ...\$259/289/379/509

Printer

Canon BJC-240/4200/4300 ...\$196/279/299
Epson 400/600 ...\$289/386
Brother 641 Laser (refurbished) ...\$319
Laser HL730/760DX ...\$429/525
Laser HL720 ...\$379
HP Laser 6L ...\$515
UMAX Flatbed Scanner 4800dpi ...\$276



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Computers

All system are internet ready and offered with one month free internet access

Prices are effective before August 31 and subject to change without notice.

Laptops

continued from page 24

AST Ascentia A60

Estimated price: \$4,300

The Ascentia offers a 150 MHz Pentium with MMX, 16 MB RAM, 1.44 GB hard drive, 10x CD-ROM drive, and 12.1-inch display.

Aside from the operating system, the only bundled software was McAfee VirusScan. This machine can handle most home-office and student multimedia needs. Program response time was swift and flawless. AST has aimed this model at entry-level mobile users. Floppy drive and CD-ROM drive are interchangeable and cannot be used

simultaneously. Sound quality was good, but less rich compared to other machines tested. Includes a three-year worldwide warranty.

Compaq Armada 7730MT

Price: \$6,750

This machine weighs in at a relatively hefty 3.69 kg (8.2 lb)—its power supply is built-in—you don't need a separate A/C adapter—with a larger



footprint than many of the other machines. It has a 166 MHz Pentium processor with MMX, 32 MB RAM, 2.1 GB hard drive, integrated 33.6 Kbps Digital Simultaneous Voice and Data (DSVD) modem, and 12.1-inch display. The pointing device is a trackstick. Compaq includes a "weight saver" plastic shell to go into the multi-bay instead of the floppy drive or optional 8x CD-ROM drive, for the times when you don't need to carry either.

This is a speedy beast, as one would

expect from a machine that can run either Windows 95 or Windows NT (you choose when you start up the first time). Battery life is rated at up to three hours; this is, as usual, optimistic. Standard warranty is three years.



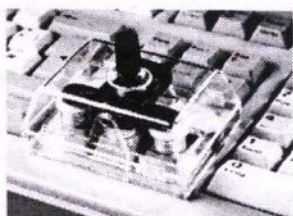
Dell Latitude LM P1665T

Estimated price: \$4,000

The model offers you the choice at startup of running either Windows 95 or Windows for Workgroups 3.11. It is configured with a 166 MHz Pentium processor with MMX, 16 MB RAM, a 1.6 GB hard drive, 12x CD-ROM drive and 12.1-inch display. It offers consistently slick performance, crisp graphics and a very comfortable keyboard feel; a trackpad is built into the palmrest. Floppy drive and CD-ROM drive cannot be used simultaneously and must be swapped in the same drive bay. Standard one-year warranty.

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- Supports diagonal movement
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MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

continued on page 28

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Archer MXL

Acer 
a fresh perspective

Archer KP

- 166 MHz Intel Pentium MMX Processor
- Acer BG 45 Novel Certified Mid-tower Case
- Acer AP 57 Motherboard, 512K Cache
- 32MB EDO RAM
- 1.44 Panasonic Floppy Disk Drive
- 2.1GB Quantum ST Ultra DMA / 33 MB
- Cirrus Logic Video Card 2MB
- 24X Panasonic EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Acer FX-16 Full Duplex Sound Card with 3D Effect
- MLI 691 Stereo Speakers
- 33.6K Int. Voice Modem w/SVD
- Windows 95 Enhanced Keyboard
- Logitech Two Button Mouse
- Sceptre P 511

Lease for \$ 56 per month + taxes

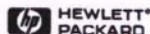
WOW !
\$1579

- 233 MHz Intel Pentium MMX Processor
- Acer HX 45 ATX Mid-tower Case
- Acer AX 5T, TX Motherboard, 512K Cache
- 32MB SDRAM
- 1.44 Panasonic Floppy Disk Drive
- 3.2GB Quantum ST Ultra DMA / 33 MB
- ATI 3D Xpression 4MB PC to TV
- 24X Panasonic EIDE CD-ROM Drive
- Sound Blaster AWE 64
- Yamaha M-15 Stereo Speakers
- 33.6K Int. Voice Modem w/SVD
- New Liteon Multi-Function Keyboard
- Logitech Two Button Mouse
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When deposed leaders dream



**Mac
Rant**

David Rosen

In the beginning there was Steve. Not the Steve that made things. Nay, this is the story of the Steve That Talked About Making Things. And the Steve That Talked About Making Things looked around and saw what Steve had made, and saw that it was good. And Steve talked. And the lesser Steve was banished to the lab whence from he was seen no more.

And the Steve That Talked About Making Things led his chosen people throughout thick and thin. But, lo, the glory of the Steve was envied and against him rose the Forces of Business. In a great battle was the Steve injured and many thought him dead. But the Steve was wise. To the mountain did he retreat to wait for his revelation to come true. To keep busy he played with what came NeXT, but these were lean years and no cash would grow. Instead, the Steve did produce four score thousand shiny black obelisks that did nothing. The Steve waited.

And to deep within his solitude, the Steve was sent a vision of toys...and an offer to purchase an animation company, cheap. And the Steve breathed life into Pixar, which begat a movie about Woody and Buzz, which begat merchandising to profit the entity whose name starts with a "D" and whose incarnation sports a pointed tail. For the Steve had learned to join forces in hopes for a new chance at redemption. Still, the Steve waited.

Finally, the Steve descended from high atop the mountain. Seeing great disarray, he said, "Hearken to me for I am the One, the Only, the true Steve. Thou shalt worship me exclusively and have no other Steves before me." And the Board bowed in respect and terror and awe.

The Steve saw the soon-to-be sold Newton division and proclaimed loudly, so that all throughout the Valley could hear: "Thou shalt not sell this division, for it is mine." And plans that had been designed a scant four months before were torn asunder. And his tired minions quaked in fear and looked to the Steve for succor. And Steve said: "Wait and I shall rescind your sabbatical programs and make you work harder, not smarter."

"I need the money previously marked for your sabbatical programs to breathe life in the Newton division. In the fight to come, I shall need five hundred million eMates filled to overflowing with Newton software as we go forward to the Great Battle."

And before he was cast into the bottomless pit, a doubting minion said, "But, oh Great

One, the Newton division has never made any money!"

The Steve was great with scorn and he

replied, "You must have faith and a new accounting system to show profits whence none was made before."

And the Steve looked and he saw Power Computing, a company making mighty fortune
continued on page 29

Aretê Computers

Est. 1988 Helping people & computers work together



This Months Specials

Aretê 166+

Cyrix 6x86 P166+ MHz Processor

16 MB EDO RAM

256K Pipelined Cache

1.44MB 3.5" FD

2.1 GB HD (10m/s)

18xCD-ROM

Ess1868 16 bit PNP Sound Card

Matrox Mystique 3D w/2MB SGRAM

US Robotics 33.6 Fax/Modem/Voice

104 Win 95 Keyboard

Logitech 3 Button Mouse

Windows 95 CD SR2

Works for Windows 95

15" Hyundai DeluxScan 15G Color Monitor with Speakers

Mini Tower Case

Warranty 2 Years Parts & Labour

\$1,899

Upgrade to AMD-K6™ 166MHz MMX Enhanced	\$ 279.00
Upgrade to AMD-K6™ 200MHz MMX Enhanced	\$ 489.00
Upgrade to INTEL Pentium 166MHz MMX	\$ 299.00
Upgrade to INTEL Pentium 200MHz MMX	\$ 589.00

MONITORS

Hyundai

Hyundai DeluxScan 15G .28mm \$ 399

Hyundai DeluxScan 17MB .42mm ... \$ 549

Mitsubishi

DiamondScan 15HX .28mm \$ 549

DiamondPro 17" 87TXM .25mm \$ 2398

DiamondPro 21" 21TX .30mm \$ 2398

Eizo/Nanao

FlexScan 17"TX-C7S .25mm \$ 1395

PRINTERS

Brother

Laser Jet WL660 600dpi 6ppm \$ 429

Laser Jet HL760 1200dpi 6ppm \$ 629

US Robotics MODEMS

Sporster Voice 33.6 V.34 (OEM) Int. .. \$ 145

Sporster 56K X2 Fax/Modem Int. \$ 285

IBM PC 340

Highlights



- ⊙ Pentium 166MHz
- ⊙ 256K L2 Cache
- ⊙ 16MB EDO memory
- ⊙ PCI local bus video 1MB controller
- ⊙ 2.5GB hard drive
- ⊙ 18xCD Rom
- ⊙ 16 bit PNP Sound Card
- ⊙ US Robotics 33.6 Fax/Modem/Voice
- ⊙ 15" Hyundai Color Monitor
- ⊙ Lotus SmartSuite
- ⊙ 3 Years Warranty Parts & Labour

P166 \$ 2,749

IBM PC 350

Highlights



- ⊙ Pentium 166MHz MMX or 200MHz MMX
- ⊙ 256K L2 Cache
- ⊙ 16MB or 32MB EDO memory
- ⊙ PCI local bus video 1MB controller
- ⊙ 2.5GB hard drive
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Notebooks

continued from page 26

Digital HiNote Ultra 2000

Price: \$8,693

This notebook is one of the high-powered, high-priced machines we mentioned earlier. Its claim to fame: a (brace yourself) 14.1-inch, 1024x768 display—that's more viewing area than many desktops have! Because of this monster screen, the unit is larger than most, but it's only an inch and a quarter thick, and weighs a mere 2.25 kg (5 lb.) The 2.1 GB hard drive is user removable, and the machine comes with 32 MB of RAM, a 166 MHz Pentium processor, 20x CD-ROM drive, and 33.6 Kbps data/fax/voice modem that's flash upgradeable to 56 Kbps.

The palmrest is huge, with the keyboard set way back. It felt too big for a notebook, although the touch was quite acceptable. Floppy drive and CD-ROM must take turns using the expansion bay.

Performance was smooth and speedy; video clips played in synch with their sound, with no hesitation or jerkiness. Standard three-year warranty.

Eurocom 6200

Estimated price: \$4,350

This model is another 200 MHz MMX powerhouse, with 32 MB RAM, 2.1 GB hard drive, 11x CD-ROM drive, and 12.1-inch display. This

machine was a reliable performer with all software tested. Since the floppy drive and CD-ROM drive are both integrated into the unit's standard design, there's no need to fiddle with swapping these components. The keyboard had an acceptable feel to it, and the unit has two back supports that allow the machine to be angled for more comfortable computing. Standard one-year warranty.



HP OmniBook 2000CT

Price: \$3,594.

The 2000CT has a 133 MHz Pentium processor with MMX, 12.1-inch display, 16 MB of RAM, and 1.44 GB hard drive. A 10x CD-ROM drive is optional. You can use the CD-ROM and floppy drives simultaneously by attaching the floppy drive to the parallel port, or simply leave it in the expansion bay if you don't need the CD-ROM drive. The drive has a neat little pop-out handle that makes it very easy to remove without undue tugging at breakable bits. The keyboard has large, flat keys, and a trackstick with very noisy mouse buttons.

You have the choice of Windows 95 or Windows for Workgroups at initial startup. Performance is quite acceptable, and the unit comes with HP's TopTools management software, plus HP's personal information manager. There's a standard three-year worldwide warranty.

IBM ThinkPad 380D

Price: \$4,399

This machine has a 150 MHz Pentium with MMX, 16 MB RAM, 12.1-inch display, 2.1 GB hard drive, and 8x CD-ROM drive. The floppy drive and CD-ROM drive are both

built-in, so they may be used simultaneously. The TrackPoint III trackstick is responsive, and its buttons have a better feel than previous models; IBM has always produced quite usable keyboards.

The system comes with Lotus SmartSuite, signups for several online services, and some utilities, as well as CoSession remote-control software so IBM technicians can perform diagnostics if necessary. Standard warranty is one-year.

NEC Versa 6200MX

Price: \$5,319

The Versa 6200MX is a 166 MHz Pentium with MMX, with 32 MB of RAM, 2.1 GB hard drive, 10x CD-ROM drive, and a bright, clear, 1024x768 13.3-inch display. The CD-ROM drive and floppy drive cannot be used at the same time. The VersaGlide touchpad is very sensitive, yet the keyboard has a slightly harder touch than many of the others we've looked at. Along with the standard ports, the Versa has a video-out that will send its display to a television set.

System performance is brisk, although the machine does devour batteries to give you that speed. And the unit is a heavyweight in other ways as well—it tips the scales at just about 3.6 kg (8 lb.)!

Toshiba Satellite 220CDS

Price: \$3,139

This is the only unit in our roundup with a passive matrix enhanced STN display. It has a 133 MHz Pentium processor, 16 MB RAM, 1.35 GB hard drive, and 10x CD-ROM drive that exchanges places with the floppy drive when needed. The screen is 12.1 inches.

This is also the only machine that offers a Universal Serial Bus (USB) port, for the new generation of peripherals under development. Toshiba is ahead of its time here.

The keyboard is comfortable to type on; its

pointing device is a trackstick. Performance is acceptable, although there are perceptible pauses when playing video clips. Warranty is three years.

Editor's choice

Dell Latitude LM P166ST

This was a tough call. We excluded the Compaq and Digital machines (both gorgeous computers) from consideration, because they're priced so far above the others that it wouldn't have been a fair contest. Of the remaining field, we chose the Dell Latitude LM P166ST, a moderately priced unit with very good battery life and adequate power for most needs. It best balanced price, features, and performance. ♦

Site seeing:

Angel Computer, Tel: 905-501-8375.
Web site: <http://www.angelcomputer.com>
Apple Canada, Tel: 800-263-3394.
Web site: <http://www.apple.ca>
AST Canada, Tel: 905-507-3278.
Web site: <http://www.astcanada.com>
Compaq Canada Inc., Tel: 800-567-1616.
Web site: <http://www.compaq.ca>
Dell Computer Corp., Tel: 800-387-5752.
Web site: <http://www.dell.com>
Digital Computer Corp., Tel: 800-344-4825.
Web site: <http://www.windows.digital.com>
Eurocom, Tel: 613-224-6122.
Web site: <http://www.eurocom.ca>
Hewlett Packard Canada, Tel: 800-387-3867.
Web site: <http://www.hp.com>
IBM Canada, Tel: 800-267-9077.
Web site: <http://www.can.ibm.com>
Packard Bell NEC Inc., Tel: 800-632-4554.
Web site: <http://www.nec.com>
Toshiba, Tel: 800-387-5645.
Web site: <http://www.toshiba.ca>

Toshiba Libretto 50CT

The \$3,139 Toshiba Libretto 50CT is neither fish nor fowl, slithered into the gap between notebook computers and hand-held personal computers (HPCs). At 1.8 lb. and 8.3x4.5x1.3 inches, it's much smaller and lighter than a full-fledged notebook, yet it contains a 75 MHz Pentium processor, 16 MB RAM, and an 810 MB hard drive, and quite happily runs Windows 95. Its TFT screen is only 6.1 inches, although the keyboard contains everything you'd expect on a full-sized notebook, but in miniature. It's not a touch-typist's keyboard by any stretch of the imagination, and the nub of a trackstick sitting beside the screen on the cover (the mouse buttons are on the outside of the case) is tricky to master.

Like HPCs, it only has a 115.2 Kbps infrared port on the main unit for input and output; you attach an I/O adapter with seri-

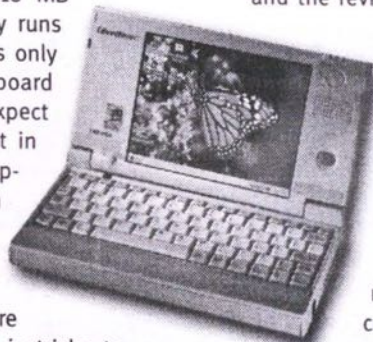
al, parallel, and external video ports for other connections. There's one PC Card slot, normally protected with a plastic filler that will probably get lost in short order. The optional \$149 floppy drive has a PC Card controller.

Battery life is not good (rated 1.5-2 hours), and the review unit continued to lose

power even while turned off—I charged it on Saturday, and by Monday the battery had lost over half its charge without having been turned on for two days!

The Libretto is not meant to be your primary computer, but it tucks neatly into a briefcase or bag to keep you in touch

while you're on the road. And in spite of its idiosyncrasies, it has a certain charm one could get used to.—Lynn Greiner



Carrying on about cases

When you have several thousand dollars worth of electronics to carry around, how do you do it? Few notebook computers come with carrying cases anymore, so do you just stuff the contraption into whatever tote you have around the house, or do you actually use a proper computer case?

In the interest of protecting your computer investment, a computer bag makes a whole lot of sense, and these days, there are hundreds of designs from which to choose. Market leader Targus alone offers 35 under its own name, plus another 50 produced under other names. And with just Targus' Canadian production estimated to be about 250,000 units this year (4.4 million worldwide), you can tell notebook carrying cases are big business.

But how do you choose the right computer carrier? Targus of Canada vice-president Zeno Ricci offers a few hints.

First, decide what you need to carry. There's the computer, obviously, but what accessories

do you need? How about an A/C adapter, or a removable CD-ROM or floppy drive, or a portable printer? Do you also need to tote papers or books? What about diskettes, PC cards, or CD-ROMs? For overnighters, do you want to take a change of clothes?

Once you've decided, you're ready to consider a computer bag of the appropriate capacity. There are even cases available that combine a wheeled carry-on with a removable computer case, for frequent flyers.

As far as the bag itself is concerned, look for a well-protected system compartment. Some vendors are using air-filled foam tubes for padding, while others rely on a suspended sling to absorb travel shock. If there's the potential for your machine to move around in its compartment, there should be some way to fasten it in place—typically Velcro-secured straps. Make sure the handle and shoulder strap are sturdy, well-padded, and comfortable to hold. The case's fabric is a matter of taste, but it should be strong and waterproof.—Lynn Greiner

B.C. company creates interactive identity

BY JUNE CAMPBELL

AnorMED Inc, a new speciality pharmaceutical company in Langley, has launched a large print and interactive identity design project to present corporate information to potential investors, partners, employees and collaborators.

AnorMed is a bio technology company that develops therapeutic and diagnostic applications of metal complexes and metal binding

compounds with emphasis on life threatening disease and acute treatments.

President and chief executive officer, Dr. Mike Abrams, established the new business in the Lower Mainland after spending the last decade with the Philadelphia-based research unit of Johnson Matthey.

The interactive project, developed by Vancouver's Web Pool Syndicate, consists of a Web site and an interactive presentation project created in Macromedia Director. Herrainco

Design Associates developed an accompanying print brochure.

According to Web Pool project manager Emma Payne, eight people involved in the development of the entire identity project, which took three months to complete.

"They wanted to showcase their record in drug discovery and provide information about their leaders and core science.

Because bio-technology companies range dramatically in terms of size, history and potential, it was necessary for us to ensure that the AnorMED 'look' reflected their position as well as their unique approach to drug discovery."♦

Site seeing:

AnorMed, <http://www.anormed.com>

MacRant

continued from page 27

from the Steve's great Macintosh. "Let them be banished to the Fiery Pit of Hell," he roared.

But Power Computing was abundant with lawyers and Apple was forced to buy out the clone maker for US\$100 million. The Steve proclaimed throughout the Valley, "let no one license my technology again."

"Who's going to trust Apple as a business partner? Who's going to sign a contract with Apple to buy a million dollars worth of Macs?" said an unbeliever before he, too, was tossed into the bottomless pit. "Your faith in me must sustain you," replied the Steve.

"But what of Umax?" asked another meekly.

"I am all-powerful and I decree that Umax alone may use the new Macintosh OS 8.0 in its clones because it pleaseth me" replied the Steve.

"Gil! Wake up, Gil!"

"Ummmph? Huh?"

"Gil, you've been having that dream again," said his wife.

"What? Wow, it was so vivid. It was just like a QuickTime VR movie. I shouldn't have ordered the pizza with double anchovies."

"Yes dear," she soothed. It was going to be another long night in the Amelio household. ♦

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Industry Canada helps B.C. businesses

BY JUNE CAMPBELL

When Industry Canada says "I'm from the government and I'm here to help you," it's the truth, according to B.C. businesspeople. The Strategis Web site and the Student Connection Program are attracting enthusiastic support from local businesses.

Richmond's ACT Laboratory Ltd is a small, young company that is rapidly emerging as a significant player in the North American gaming industry. Act Labs is known for its high-end computer gaming accessories, such as joysticks and racing wheels, and for providing ESL (English as a Second Language) and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) training products to Asia.

According to Betty Ho, senior manager of business development, the Strategis Web site is helping ACT find partners and market its products to an international audience. "We registered our company for free in Strategis' big multimedia database—we're a small company with 25 employees, but with this kind of international exposure we can be

competitive with the big companies."

Industry Canada's Laurie Dalkin reports that Dog and Pony Games of Peachland was delighted to receive enquiries from other places in Canada as well as Hong Kong, the United States, Australia, Newfoundland and other points around the world shortly after registering its game development business in the Strategis database.

The Canadian Company Capabilities (CCC) database features more than 30,000 Canadian companies and 200,000 products and services.

The Strategis Web site—said to be the largest in North America—is rated by Microsoft as one of the top five business sites, and receives an average of 13,000 hits per day. Strategis offers "across the board" services, everything to help the small to large business at any stage of the business cycle, from startup to growth and even to bankruptcy.

The site, which is updated almost daily, has a multitude of offerings, including special sections for consumer information (credit card calculation, a consumer help desk and fraud information) and a human resource and

training component that helps young people find work. The business network component receives 4,000 visitors a day and has had 12 million documents downloaded since its launch.

Strategis is of little value, of course, unless a business is online. Industry Canada's Student Connection Program is one affordable and effective solution to businesses needing some help acquiring Internet skills. Gary Warnock, a public affairs advisor for Industry Canada, reports that over 400 B.C. businesses a year have used this program to learn how to use both the Internet and the Strategis site.

Participating university and college students develop and deliver customized training programs at a cost to the business of \$150 for 15 hours of training.

When Dynapro Systems of Annacis Island needed to train employees, it opted to use the program. Karen Sheppard, Dynapro's education and development coordinator said: "We're a technology company with 400 employees. We manufacture computer hardware and software using Touch Screen for

industrial control systems. We needed to train some of our employees in Internet use, so we tried the Connection Program and we're very pleased. The student assigned to us was a great ambassador and was very professional in his approach. We also found it to be cost effective. It's a good example of how the government is reaching out to stimulate small business activities through the use of technology. It's great for the students, too. Aside from making some money, they also get industry contacts and experience."

The Connection Program has been used by a diverse array of businesses, including the Goose Green Bed & Breakfast in Langley and Nico Environmental Health Services. ♦

Site seeing:

Strategis, <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca>
Strategis Help Desk, Tel: 800-328-6189.
Student Connection Program,
Tel: 888-807-7777.
Act Labs, Tel: 604-278-3650.
<http://www.actlab.com>
Dynapro Systems
<http://www.dynapro.com>

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Dual PII 300mhz (two CPUs).....\$4300

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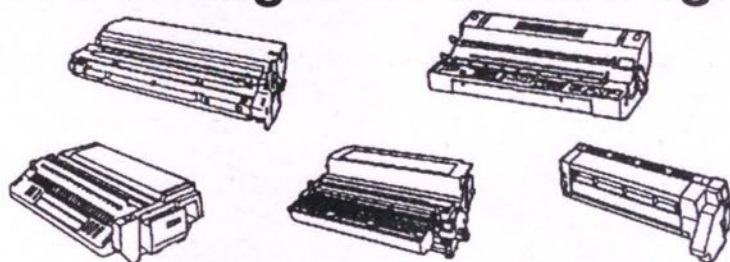
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Psion unleashes handheld powerhouse

BY ALAN THWAITS

Psion Series 5
From: Psion PLC
Price: \$1,000

U.K.-based Psion PLC is using the phrase "Take your office...wherever you go!" to market its new Series 5 line of handheld computers. Given the capabilities of this "pocket rocket," the phrase may be the most accurate slogan in the heady world of computer marketing.

Psion is clearly tagging the Series 5—which follows the Series 3a and 3c machines that helped Psion gain 28 percent of the world's palmtop/handheld computer market, according to Gartner Group researchers—as Windows CE beaters. And, until Version 2.0 of Windows CE comes out in the fall, it's clear Psion is the victor in the contest.

The Series 5 runs on Psion's EPOC32 OS, which offers a full 32-bit, multi-tasking, multi-threaded, real-time operating environment, and is available in 4 MB and 8 MB formats (only the 8 MB model is being distributed in Canada). It features a touch-type keyboard and full-width (640x240) 16 greyscale, backlit touch-sensitive screen. The machine weighs 368 g (13 oz.), and offers approximately 35 hours of continuous usage on a pair of AA batteries.

Very compatible

Built-in applications on the Series 5 include a Microsoft-, Lotus-, and Corel-compatible word processor (with 100,000-word spell checker and 600,000-word thesaurus), a spreadsheet program that's compatible with Excel, Lotus 1-2-3, QuattroPro, and Works, and powerful Agenda and Data applications that synchronize with most popular PC schedulers (including Lotus Organizer and Schedule+), in addition to the usual handheld time, alarm, and calculator functions.

Also included are a couple of features not usually found on handheld machines: full digital sound recording capability, with an omni-directional microphone, external speaker, and external controls; and a sketch



program that allows the creation and manipulation of bit-mapped graphics, including a small library of clip art.

This mighty marvel is powered by a Cirrus Logic PS7110 single-chip processor, the result of a collaboration between Advanced RISC Machines, which designed the 32-bit ARM 710 core processor, Cirrus Logic, and Psion Software. At 18.432 MHz, running on 3 volts, it can deliver roughly 15 VAX MIPS, about the same as a 33 MHz 486 PC.

Waiting for the mail

Psion's release on the Series 5 at simultaneous launches on June 16 was clearly timed to gain market share before Microsoft's release of Windows CE Version 2.0 sometime this fall. That means the current crop of Series 5 machines aren't shipping with an Internet mail/Web browsing application, although Psion has promised this will be available as a free download by the end of December.

Once Internet communications apps are available for the Series 5, and the worldwide community of Psion developers have ported commercial and shareware originally developed for the Series 3X machines, the Series 5 may very well be the product that keeps Psion near the top of the handheld heap! ♦

Site seeing:

Psion PLC, Web site: <http://www.pSION.com>
Syscan International Inc.,
Web site: <http://www.syscan.com>
Series 5 Software, Web site:
<http://homepages.enterprise.net/livewire/software.htm>



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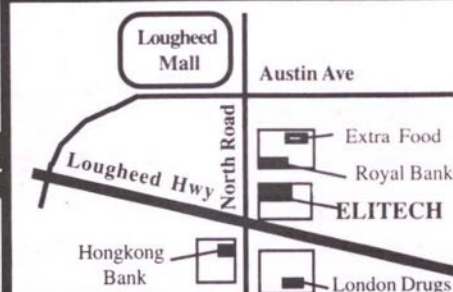
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HP's late handheld entry worth the wait

BY LYNN GREINER

320LX HPC

From: Hewlett-Packard

Suggested retail price: \$828

When we looked at Windows CE devices a few months ago, a few units were announced, but

unreleased. Hewlett-Packard's 320LX handheld personal computer (HPC) may have come out a bit late, but HP took advantage of the time lag to make its unit a distinct improvement over the first generation of CE units.

The first thing you notice about this machine is its screen. At 640x240 pixels resolution, it's a

full inch wider than competing systems, which only offer 480x240. This means you see full lines in your e-mail messages, and several more columns in spreadsheets.

It's still monochrome, and, although backlit, it still suffers from the usual LCD problems of glare, and being difficult to read (HP has adjusted its screen fonts to compensate). Now that Toshiba has raised the bar with its Libretto micro-notebook, it's probably only a matter of time before someone comes out with a colour HPC. (The challenge here is power; the 320LX runs on 2 AA batteries, like other HPCs, and monochrome screens are fairly frugal in their electrical demands—unless vendors do some magic, colour HPCs will probably be battery hogs.)

Size issues

The 320LX is about 0.5 inches longer than its competitors, which makes it harder to stuff into a pocket, but allows more generous spacing of its hard plastic keys. It is possible to touch-type, if you have small fingers and no nails. Turning on the optional key clicks helps.

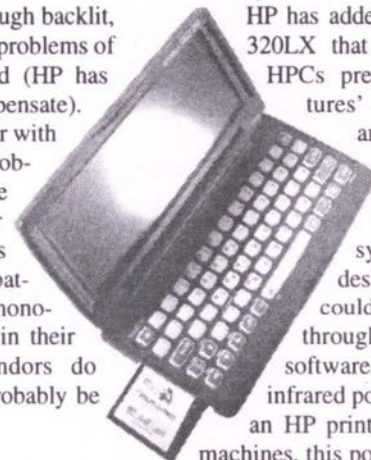
The keyboard is in the standard HPC layout, and has a Num Lock, but no Caps Lock. One

keyboard oddity is the power "switch"—it's the space bar (you turn the machine off by holding down the Function key and pressing the space bar).

HP has added some goodies to the 320LX that make some of other HPCs previously dubious 'features' truly useful. Chief among them is printing. The original CE devices had no way to output files, except by synchronizing with a desktop computer, which could then print documents through its own application software. On the 320LX, the infrared port can be used to talk to an HP printer (on first generation machines, this port could only be used to exchange appointments with another HPC), or you can print using a serial cable. You can also send and receive faxes using a PC card (PCMCIA) modem.

Pocket programs

Like other HPCs, the 320LX comes with Pocket Internet Explorer (although here it's



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Home entertainment, computer style

BY S.J. ROSS

With the reminder of winter's wetness in early September, many a West Coaster will be looking indoors for entertainment to pass the rainy winter months. Of course, you can curl up with a good book, catch an exhilarating movie, or spend an evening at the theater. Or you can do all of the above—and much more—without leaving the warm glow of your PC. All in the home entertainment market is not rosy, however, so choose wisely.

Opening Night

From: The Learning Company

Suggested retail price: \$39.95

Have you ever dreamed of writing, directing, and starring in a play guaranteed to open to ecstatic applause? With Opening Night you can do all this without having to leave home.

Designed for children 6 to 14, Opening Night has a seemingly limitless number of items, actions, actors, and theatrical devices to choose from when creating your play. Sets run the gamut from shady alleys and pretty farms to gloomy graveyards and deserted streets, props range from interesting decor to clues, animals, and tools, and you can light the stage to create your desired ambiance, and can choose from a plethora of sound effects, including wild applause, crying animals, clanking machines, and chirping birds.

And, to act in your play, you can choose from among a cast of fascinating characters, including aristocrats, eccentrics, and villains, and can write their dialogue and direct their movements.

Great fun for young and old, Opening Night also allows you to write and print a playbill, and save multiple performances to enjoy again and again.

The Complete Shakespeare Collection; World's Greatest Classical Books

From: Hoffman + Associates

Suggested retail price: \$29.99 each

Welcome to the '90s, where enterprising multimedia companies are ripping the written word off the page and slapping them on CD-ROMs. A move not necessarily for the best.

With 37 plays, five poems, and 154 sonnets, as well as Barron's Book Notes for 14 of the plays, photographs, illustrations ranging from famous actors to set designs, sample tests and essay topics, and the ability to highlight text in one of four colours or create a slide show, The Complete Shakespeare Collection captures the words that the inked nib of Shakespeare's quill once recorded on parchment. But, without any audio (except the one video scene from *Taming of the Shrew*), and without a Shakespearean actor to breathe passion into the Bard's words, the CD-ROM is, dare I say, much ado about nothing.

Unfortunately, despite containing 3,500 unabridged literary works, including histori-

cal, religious, and scientific documents, as well as fiction, short stories, plays, and poetry from some of the classic authors—such as William Blake, Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling, Robert Burns, and Mark Twain—and even offering the American Heritage Concise Dictionary, profiles of more than 500 authors, and 12 videos, the World's Greatest Classical Books also suffers from a horrid lack of imagination.

While both CD-ROMs might be a handy resource for time-pressed students who wish to easily copy and print illustrations and text, both are good examples of a tedious use of multimedia.

Thumbnail Theater: Treasure Island

From: Hoffman + Associates

Suggested retail price: \$49.99

As poor as the above literary CD-ROMs are, is how good *Treasure Island* is. Focusing on the Robert Louis Stevenson novel, *Treasure Island*, is a charming, fascinating, wonderfully inviting adventure aimed at users age nine and up.

Children can watch and listen to a delightful nine-minute animated story synopsis, can view a timeline, learn about pirates, life at sea, and pirate gold, read the full text of the novel, and gain information about *Treasure Island* and the life and other works of Stevenson.

The narration and animation are lively and witty, the story and information are engaging, and the CD-ROM navigation and print and copy capabilities are wonderfully easy to use.

Cinemanía 97:

Steven Spielberg's Director's Chair

From: Microsoft

Suggested retail price: \$69.95

Cinemanía 97 is a handy and entertaining reference guide to the films, the actors, and all the little people who make the movies.

It has more than 20,000 titles, 1,000 movie stills, 4,500 profiles of movie professionals, 30 video clips, 150 dialogue clips, filmographies for 10,000 personalities, and reviews from Pauline Kael, Leonard Maltin, and Roger Ebert.

Director's Chair, produced by Spielberg, hosted by Spielberg, and with Spielberg's name in shiny gold letters above the title, is packed with all the dazzle you expect to find in film and multimedia.

Consisting of three CD-ROMs packed with videos, sound effects, and music, starring the odd combination of Penn and Teller, Jennifer Aniston, and Quentin Tarantino, Director's Chair puts you in the hot seat. It also offers

the services of well-known film specialists such as the art director for *Twister*.

With Spielberg persistently at your shoulder: telling you where to go, encouraging you to stay within budget, fix it in the edit, and so on, you make all the directorial decisions: from supervising the writing and shooting, to editing the print, adding the sound effects and score, and promoting and screening your film.

While the program is incredibly comprehensive, it insists on a very linear progression, allowing for little creative exploration.

Entertainment on the Net

Despite its growing reputation as home to the World Wide Wait, the Internet offers an embarrassment of entertainment riches.

Of course, there is the glut of entertainment forums (for example, enter CompuServe's Art & Entertainment area for a selection that includes everything from People magazine to an animation forum, Beatles' forum, and even fan clubs), but if you prefer something with more information, try the following sites.

With books ranging from *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* to *A Christmas Carol*, Project Gutenberg is an excellent choice for tracking down a good read.

With book reviews, author tour information, book awards and *Publishers Weekly*, Bookwire is a comprehensive site for people who want to know what is new and interesting in the publishing industry.

While online theatre listings tend to focus on individual theaters—quite handy if you are planning a holiday—one especially comprehensive site called Theater All Over The Web links to several theatres.

For an abundance of popular entertainment topics—from television and radio to movies, entertainment news, and celebrity information—try the Entertainment Network News.

For a more quirky look at movies and television, as well as information on current music, visit The Hell Hole.

And drop by Celebrities on the Web to join the Hollywood chat forum or to search the database of celebrities, including authors, comedians, and musicians on the Web. ♦

Site seeing:

Bookwire, <http://www.bookwire.com>

Celebrities on the Web

<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Hills/4360>

Entertainment Network News,

<http://www.slip.net/~scmetro/enn.htm>

The Hell Hole,

<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2686>

Project Gutenberg, <http://www.promo.net/pg>

Theater All Over the Web,

<http://istos.istos.net.gr/theater/htm/links/glinks.htm>

Canadian treasures

BY JUNE CAMPBELL

Canadian Treasures

From: VR Didatech

Price: \$59.95

Who would have thought the material from the Canadian Archives could be interesting? It can, and the Canadian Treasures CD-ROM is the proof.

You'll embark on an interactive train journey through Canada's past to its present. To the strains of our national anthem, you'll reflect on the Canadian stamps commemorating our prime ministers. Arrange the prime ministers in chronological order and you'll be rewarded with cheers. Make a mistake and, well, that's another story.

Moving on from the prime ministers, your train trip moves through five thematic threads: Making a Nation, Discovery, Portraits, Local Stories, and Nation's Capital.

View images, Quicktime video clips, and soundtracks. Remember the flag debate? The signing of the Canadian Constitution? It's all there. You'll relive the country's centennial year celebration with the music from Bobby Gimby's *Canada*.

There are pictures of the Parliament buildings then and now, plus historical images from all Canadian provinces and territories. You'll see pictures of Canadian athletes, and a video of Nancy Greene's medal-winning ski run.

The dark side of our history is also recorded. You'll hear a moving reading of Pauline Johnson's *Letter from an Indian Wife*, an audio clip describing the effects of internment on the Japanese Canadians during World War II, and another clip discussing hardships experienced by the original Ukrainian immigrants to Canada.

Canadian Treasures is Internet-enabled with an archive link to facilitate school and community projects. Although this educational product is recommended for middle grades and up, and comes with a resource guide for teachers, it's good 'edutainment' for any age.

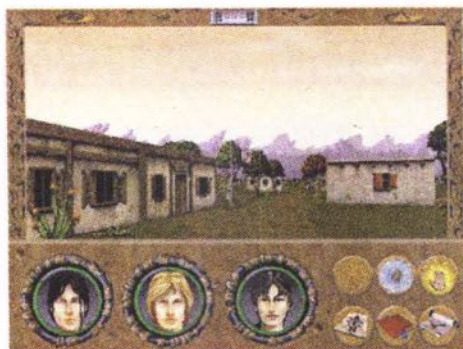
Canadian Treasures is produced by Burnaby's VR Didatech, in cooperation with the National Archives of Canada. ♦

Site seeing:

VR Didatech, <http://www.vrsystems.com>

Antara enthralls like its predecessor

BY MARC SALTZMAN



info box

Betrayal in Antara

From: Sierra.

System requirements: 486 DX4/100 or better, 16 MB RAM, 4x CD-ROM drive, 10 MB hard-drive space (80 MB recommended)

Estimated street price: \$62.99.

I distinctly remember, while writing one of my last psychology essays at the end of my four-year stint at university, my discovery of Betrayal at Krondor (BAK). Based on Raymond E. Feist's Riftwar series, this addictive role-playing game gobbled up all my work time with its rich characters and engrossing story of the kingdom of Midkemia. Funny how great games seem to surface when you've got too much work to play them.

Computer gamers who keep abreast of development news may recall that midway through producing the sequel to BAK, Feist and game company Sierra separated ways. The author took his follow-up game to 7th Level and is currently working with that game manufacturer on Return to Krondor, scheduled for an early 1998 release, while Sierra felt they had too much time and money invested into the project to let it go, and thus Betrayal in Antara (BIA) was conceived and recently released.

Fortunately—and unfortunately—BIA isn't very different from its predecessor. The good news is that BAK is a great game; any near comparison to it should be considered commendable. The downfall to this resemblance, of course, is that the original game was released in early 1994 and, technologically, quite a bit has changed since then.

Role call

BIA is a role-playing game, divided into various chapters, with roughly a half dozen mini-quests for each. Your party consists of two or three characters at a time, including such members as Aren Cordelaine, an apprentice magician who learns he has new powers; William Escobar, charming son of one of Ramar's noble families; Kaelyn Usher, a female archer; and Raal, an interesting specimen known as a Grrrlf.

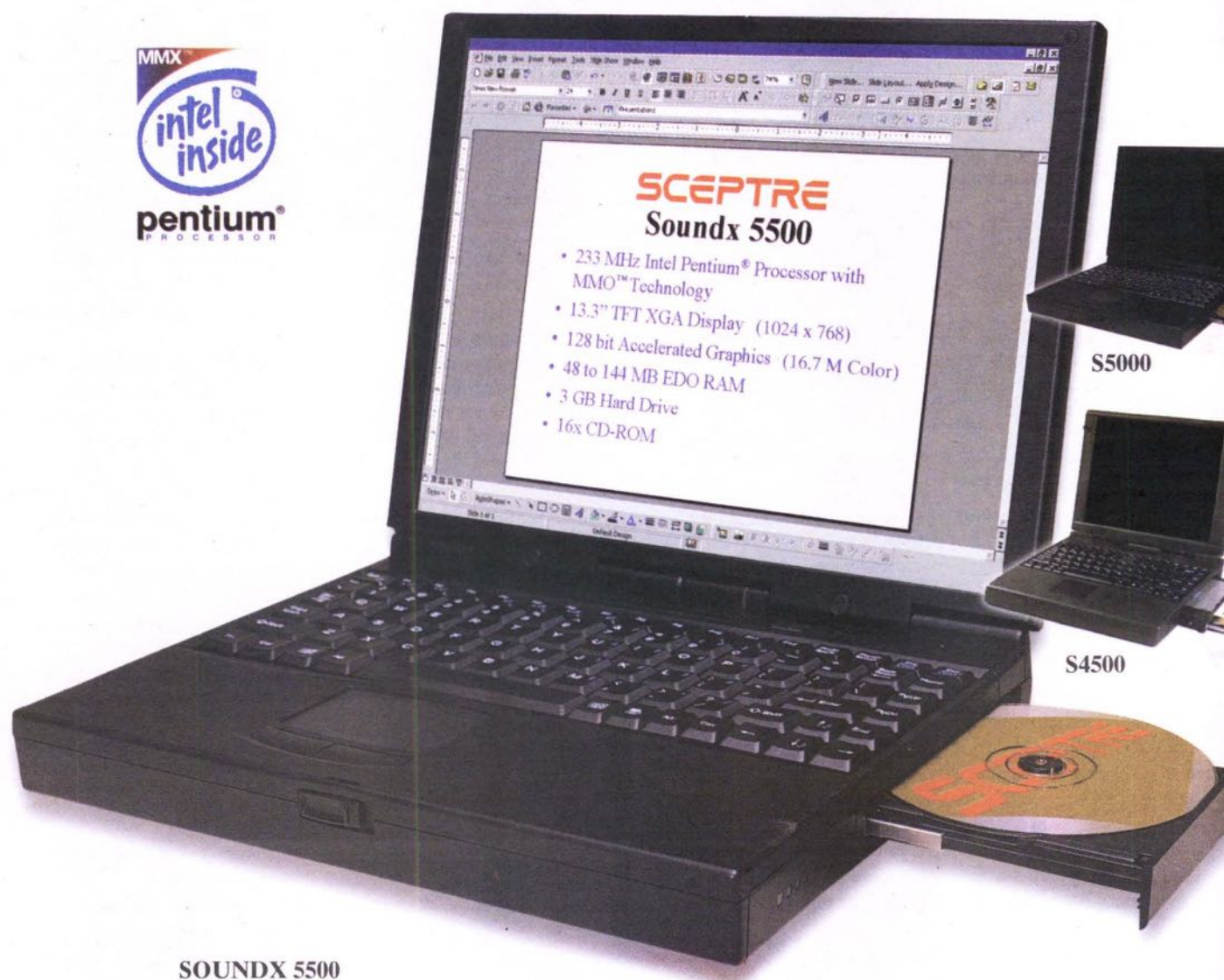
As with the original game, you travel with your crew from town to town from a first-person perspective, destined to get to the heart of

the Emperor's crumbling dynasty. As with Krondor, Antara is plagued with political nepotism, assassination, war, and civil unrest. Your

party must set out in the huge world of Antara (spanning 3 CD-ROMs) while finding treasures

continued on page 38

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Alien apocalypse now!

BY WILLIAM A. WOOD

Another peaceful day in Mega-Primus, the last inhabited city on the polluted Earth of AD

2084. Peaceful, that is, until the strange alien ships appear from dimension gates all over town, sowing chaos, fear, and destruction.

Soon, alien soldiers are spotted infiltrating buildings and subverting various organizations. Who are they? What do they want? Most

importantly, can they be stopped? As the head of X-COM, the anti-alien defence force, it's your job to come up with answers—fast.

X-COM Apocalypse, like its predecessors X-COM and X-COM: Terror from the Deep, is really two games in one. First, there is the strategic/economic level, where you are responsible

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info box

X-COM Apocalypse

From: Microprose

System requirements: 486 DX/4 100 MHz or better processor (Pentium highly recommended), 4x CD-ROM drive, SVGA VESA graphics

Estimated street price: \$70

for managing a budget, building bases, training and equipping soldiers and combat vehicles, hiring scientists and conducting research, and building new technological achievements—all the while keeping a watchful eye for alien intruders.

Whenever the invaders do appear in city buildings (or you shoot down a UFO), the tactical level comes into play. Your soldiers must confront the aliens on the ground, in either real-time or turn-based combat. These squad-level battles can be incredibly tense, particularly in the early stages of the game when your technology is quite a bit behind that of the enemy.

Only a matter of time

The previous X-COM incarnations were strictly turn-based in this regard, and many veteran players were concerned that the real-time option would ruin the feel of the game. Having tried both, I'm convinced that no one will ever use the turn-based system again. Given the high level of command over the pace of the real-time option (including pause), it is by far the more flexible and more exciting of the two choices.

Also, it makes up a bit for what I see as the only failing in X-COM Apocalypse versus its forebears: the size of the 'sprites' (your soldiers and the aliens). I found it harder to get attached to my troops, and I didn't find the aliens remotely as frightening as I did with the previous games, because both are simply too small. The smaller scale also makes the fights less claustrophobic, less terrifying (although it's no less infuriating when an alien grenade goes off in the middle of your troops).

continued on page 38

Antara

continued from page 36

and tackling puzzles, honing magic skills, and battling against a slew of "undesirables," as one

character puts it.

Once again, as with BIK, the view for combat shifts to an isometric, hexagonal grid screen, employing turn-based tactics between your

party and the enemy. This is probably one of the finest and most improved features in BIA and both novice gamers or players of the original game will adapt very quickly.

Although Sierra claims this is the first RPG to utilize high-res SVGA graphics, the appearance honestly doesn't seem any better than the first game (you can see for yourself, since the complete Betrayal at Krondor is available for free at www.sierra.com/titles/antara/krondor.html). Pixels are aplenty, the majority of outdoor textures are a muddy brown or speckled green, and the 3D engine itself seems to drag along at a snail's pace, especially considering how far apart everything is in Antara.

Not all is inadequate, though. The player's interface is well designed and intuitive, the skill and spell systems are better than those of the original, and the auto-map and conversation replay functions are designed and implemented effectively.

Tough call

These are the kind of games where I sit on the fence whether or not I can justify a \$60 purchase to the reader. All in all, BIA is a large, non-linear game with over 100 hours of role-playing, embedded in a well-conceived story. The combat model is challenging and entertaining, which is good, since you will run into many conflicts between each town. If graphics and competent voice-acting are very important to you, however, stay clear of this game.

In short, if you were a big fan of Betrayal at Krondor and simply can't wait until Feist's next game is released, then pick up BIA, as long as time and money are on your side. ♦

XCom

continued from page 37

Otherwise, I really loved this game. It is a far more satisfying sequel to X-COM than Terror from the Deep was, at least in terms of mission goals, the research tree, and overall complexity. The strategic theatre is smaller than either of the other X-COMs (a city vs. the entire planet), and the combat missions don't drag on for as long (Terror got downright boring at times with the aliens' huge underwater bases—especially as the last alien had a tendency to hide).

The aliens themselves are an interesting variety of foes, with some truly nasty surprises. They simply refuse to fight fair, and every time you develop new technology, they reveal a new weapon (more devastating than ever, naturally).

Fins are back

The detail of both the city and the combat maps is really stunning, and the "Rancho Mars," future-retro look of the vehicles, buildings, and equipment is quite cool. The vein-covered, resinous, organic style of the aliens and their equipment is quite a contrast, and adds a nice creep factor.

And once you turn the tide of the alien invasion, and begin to investigate the mysterious dimension that is the invaders' home, the chills really start!

X-COM Apocalypse has five difficulty settings, with a different city map for each (adding some replayability). As it stands, the game offers hundreds of hours of play on any level; you definitely get your money's worth—a welcome change from the cinematic trend in most recent games. ♦

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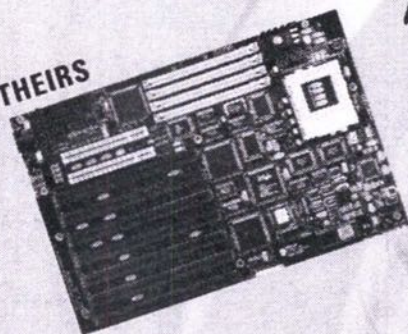
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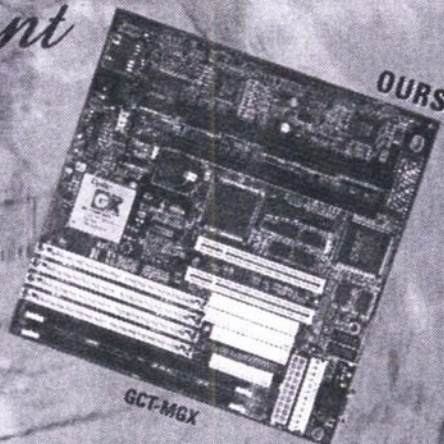
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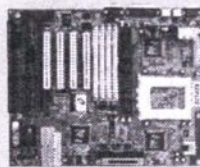
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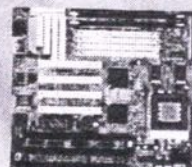
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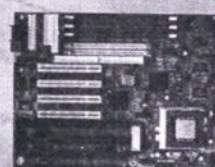
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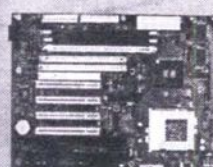
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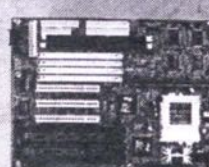
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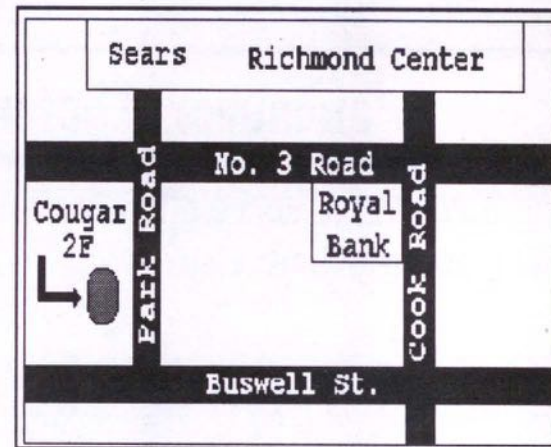
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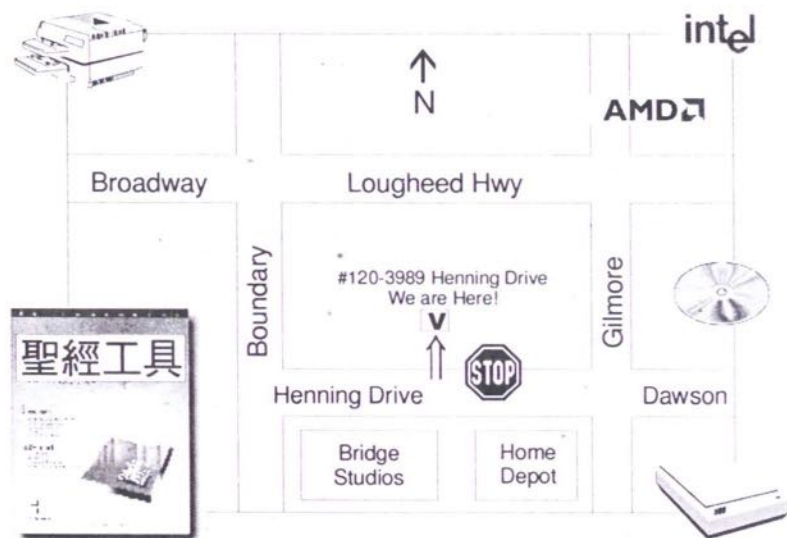
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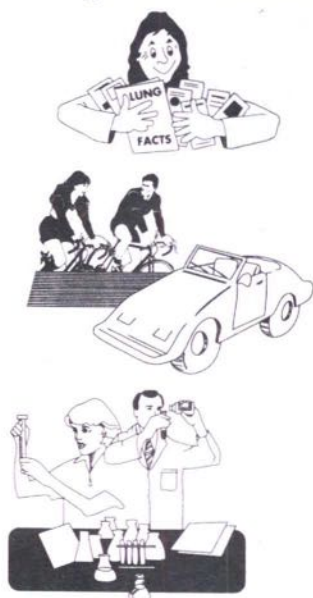
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Column

Keeping up with 'the latest and greatest' comes at a cost



Software

Alan Zisman

I'm going to let you all in on an ugly little secret: you may be picking up your copy of this publication for the articles, but the articles are really filler to get you to see the ads. That's right, in a free, advertising-supported periodical like this one, the publishers pay the writers to create content in order to deliver readers to the advertisers.

And the advertisers pay to place their ads in the hope that you, the readers, will buy their products. Since this is a computer publication, that means new hardware and software, or upgrades to your existing hardware and software.

And while many of us feel tyrannized by the urge to buy, here comes another little secret: many of us are not fulfilling our duty to buy new products on schedule. For example, recent studies have shown there are an estimated 97 million users of Windows 3.1. By some accounts, 50 percent of home users and as many as 70 percent of business users continue to use that operating environment, which dates back to 1992. (In fact, some of those users are still running Win 3.0, which dates back two years earlier).

Despite frenzied efforts by software publishers to come out with bi-annual office-suite upgrades, and semi-annual Internet browser upgrades, a large majority of users are running something other than the newest version of these key software items—even when, as in the case of Web browsers, they can upgrade for free. Millions of copies of Word Perfect 5.1 and Lotus 1-2-3 release 2.1, DOS software from the 1980s are still in use.

How come?

In many cases, users would need to make expensive upgrades of hardware to make use of the latest software. How many of you have purchased a new software product Windows 95 or a game perhaps, only to discover that if it ran at all on your existing hardware, it ran dramatically slower than what it replaced? Have you purchased a larger hard drive, added RAM, perhaps replaced your entire computer system in order to better run your new software? What was the real total cost of that \$100 software package?

In other cases, users are following the doctrine of "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." There have been suggestions that 90 percent of us use 10 percent of the features in today's advanced word processors and spreadsheets,

but most of the features added to new releases seem to fall into that "less-often-used" category. (Ironically, however, most users also resist attempts to sell them simpler products—most of use continue to use a full-powered word processor, for example, rather than a simpler product like ClarisWorks or Microsoft Works, even though the Works product would probably meet all our needs, be cheaper to purchase, and require less computer hardware).

Many users simply aren't interested in changing, having made the big, expensive jump to getting a computer in the first place and then learning to use the software. They don't see much need to do it all over again, unless there's something new and dramatic they want to do, but can't with their current setup.

A couple of teachers I know both bought their first computers about five years ago. Each got what was a power system for 1992: a 386DX-33, with 4 MB of RAM, a 100 MB hard drive, and Microsoft Word 2.0. And that hardware and software package works as well today as it did the day they bought it even though its generations from the state-of-the-art. Only the seductive call of the Internet is leading one of them to consider getting something new.

Still, even though there are millions of computer users resisting the call to upgrade, there are enough of you out there who won't settle for less than the newest, most full-featured, to keep the software and hardware creators relatively happy. (And to keep me busy reviewing their latest offerings.)

Me? I'm somewhere in the middle. As a reviewer, companies often send me copies of their latest and greatest. But after writing the review, I often find myself taking it off my computer, and going back to the older product that meets my needs and that I'm familiar with. I've checked out the latest generation of word processors, but backed up a generation—I'm writing this using Microsoft Word-95, not the newest version of Word or Word Perfect. That older version includes features I like: Windows 95 long file names, and real-time spell-checking, for example, without the added heft of the newest generation.

I've stuck to even-older versions of some products, for example, Lotus Organizer 1.1, which dates back to 1993 and fits on a single floppy disk. It still organizes my appointments and phone numbers in a simple scheduler interface. Later versions added networking and group-work-features I don't need—and take 10 times more disk space. I've tried other personal information managers, but the 1993 product is good enough for me. ♦

How about you? Does the urge to buy tyrannize you? Let me know at azisman@rogerswave.ca

The Net Generation

Guest Columnist

Don Tapscott

Autumn forces us to look forward to prepare for winters both real and virtual. For the past year, I've been trying to prepare by consulting with 300 young people from around the world. The result is *Growing Up Digital*, a book cataloguing the rise of the Net Generation that will shock members of the National Association of Baby Boomers who believe they are "America's real majority."

The Net Generation presents a challenge to the boomers' demographic supremacy. There are 85 million boomer adults in the United States and Canada. By 1999, those same adults will be parents to 88 million children between the ages of two and 22.

Also called the baby boom echo, this generation must be defined by more than demographics. They are growing up at the same

time as the new media: digital, networked, and interactive technologies that, separately and in combination, offer unprecedented opportunities to enhance, change, and revive the delivery of education, entertainment, consumer goods, and knowledge products.

Already, the Net Generation is combining demographic muscle with digital mastery. As a result, this is a generation that learns, works, thinks, and plays differently than the baby boomers. There is no single issue more important to parents, teachers, business leaders, marketers, social activists, and policy makers than understanding this generation.

Spheres of influence

Playing games, searching the Internet for information about dinosaurs, clicking through CD-ROMs, participating in chat room conversations, and sending e-mail messages to friends are attractive activities for kids because they are fun. Computers are also valuable tools for children's learning, working, and communicating, however.

Children enjoy using a computer because the screen is the one environment they can control.

Every other environment, from television programs to the classroom, is controlled by adults. This element of independent control influences how the home PC is used as a learning tool.

"At home you can do what you want with your computer," says 14-year-old Tiark Rompf from Germany. "If you wanna go surf the Net, you can do that. If you wanna write a letter, you can do that. At school you can't simply do something, you have to be educated how to do something. And you certainly can't decide what you want to do."

Combined with an Internet connection, the home PC is also a communications tool. Kids who communicate online are interacting with other people, not with the computer. Through chat rooms and e-mail, "N-Geners" are making friends who live outside their own neighborhoods and preparing for their roles in a global society.

"I have a lot of friends as it is and being online is like multiplying it by two and widening the age, location, and variety of friends I have," says 16-year-old Darla Crewe of Halifax. Thirteen-year-old Lauren Bane of New Zealand agrees: "I definitely believe that it is a won-

derful opportunity to meet new people and sample different cultures."

As with any equation that includes fun, communication, and learning, technology equals potential. Many N-Geners, such as 15-year-old Deanna Perry of Florida, have turned that potential into a business.

"My friend Ryan and I created Absolute Web Design. We're basically the 'presidents' of the company so to speak. We use advertising with banners to promote our site. People will send a request through the order form and we will create a nice home page as closely related to their request as possible."

Boomers running scared

Learning how to learn independently, making friends, and forming businesses are three typical examples of what kids use computers to do. Unfortunately, typical activities have no role in deciding what receives public attention. Adult fears about children's computer use are everywhere.

"Will a 14-year-old hacker bring my company to its knees?" the old guard executive in the

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Guest

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IBM print advertisement asks. "Heaven's Gate cultists found suicide through the Web," newspaper articles claim. Of course, most teenage computer users are not hackers, and Heaven's Gate used video tapes, not the Net, to recruit new members (whose average age was 38).

What these media fears represent is an element of what I call the generation lap. For the first time in history, kids are more knowledge-

able than their parents about an innovation central to society:

Similar to, but more complex than, the generation gap as the baby boomers knew it, N-Generators today face the combined challenge of an old generation with its old communications media, who are uneasy about the new generation and a new communications media. The new generation understands the new media much better and is embracing it, whereas the old one doesn't, and isn't. This is a formula for

confusion, insecurity, cognitive dissonance, and some nasty books, articles, and TV shows about youth and their culture and media.

Fundamental changes

The cornerstone of the NetGeneration is the shift from broadcast to interactive technology. Broadcast technologies, such as television and radio, are unidirectional: programming is decided by few and directed at many. In contrast, the new media model is interactive and

multidirectional. Instead of one source communicating to many, on the Internet many sources communicate with many other sources.

This development alone is enough to change everything for the better. ♦

Don Tapscott is the author of *Growing Up Digital*, published in Canada by McGraw-Hill, Ryerson. Participate in ongoing debates about the Net Generation at <http://www.growingupdigital.com>.

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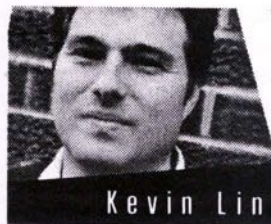


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Internet Explorer for OS/2? Not likely



**OS/2
Ready**

Kevin Linfield

During the summer, what appeared to be screen shots of Microsoft Internet Explorer for OS/2 and a Windows 95 emulator for OS/2 were circulating the Internet. Gossip and rumours were flying fast and furious on why the pictures had to be fake, or why they could be real. Now that all Macintosh computers will be running Internet Explorer, could OS/2 be next in line in Microsoft's mission to upset Netscape as the most popular Internet browser?

A close examination of the screen shots revealed many inconsistencies, such as two active title bars and menu items not CUA91 compliant. Based on that, plus unofficial news from Microsoft and IBM (and the general consensus on the Usenet newsgroups), it is most likely that these screenshots are fake. Some

jokester with too much time on their hands created them. Still, nothing like some good rumours to draw attention to OS/2 and keep us on our toes.

Interesting question: Would OS/2 users want or use a native copy of Internet Explorer? If they updated it more frequently than Netscape has with Navigator for OS/2, I'd be interested.

New Netscape

Speaking of which, as expected, IBM has announced a new licensing agreement with Netscape Communications for the Netscape Navigator 4.0 browser for OS/2. The updated Web browser features support for Dynamic HTML, JavaScript, and 100 per cent pure Java.

Unfortunately, no release date has been announced, but I'm guessing we should be able to get our hands on at least a beta copy later this fall.

Also, if you are an IBM Advantix user, you might want to check out the latest beta of the OS/2 Advantix dialer (v1.69) at ftp.ibm.net in the /pub/Advantix/OS2_Client directory (filename: TCPINST.EXE).

Java for the people?

IBM has released the entry version of their new Visual Age for Java package free for all to try. IBM claims that with this package, the average user can create a fully working Java applet in less than 90 seconds (and I've got some great land in Florida for sale...). Still, if you are interested in programming in Java, it can't hurt to download this package from <http://www.software.ibm.com/ad/vajava>.

Freeing the Fixpaks

As part of their continuing customer support, IBM has decided to make all OS/2 Fixpaks public (recall that many Fixpaks were for internal use only). As I write this, Fixpak 3 for Warp 4 and Fixpak 31 for Warp 3 are both available from <ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com>.

So far, word on the Internet is fairly positive. One possible problem for Fixpak 3 for Warp 4 users is that IDE bus mastering support is now enabled by default. If you install this fix and can no longer boot your machine (which means your IDE controller card does not support bus mastering), add the parameters "/A:0 /IBM /A:1 /IBM" to your

BASEDEV=IBM1S5o6.ADD line in your CONFIG.SYS.

I've put Warp 4 back on my machine and have installed FP3. Of course, I could not load OS/2 until I replaced my IBM1S5o6.ADD file from a backup copy. (You have been warned!)

One of the reasons to install FP3 is it adds the ability to automatically save TRAP information to a file, which should aid IBM in fixing buggy code or hardware device drivers.

Gaming outlook good

A couple of new games are in the testing phase and should be shipping this fall. Rescue from Kedk is a fast paced arcade game loosely in the Space Invaders style. Besides destroying enemy ships, you must also escort friendly vessels to safety for money to buy new weapons, additional shields, and more powerful generators. Download the beta from <http://hobbes.nmsu.edu> (search for KEDKBETA.ZIP).

Stardock Systems has released a full-featured demo (playable only the Internet) of their new game Entrepreneur. Your goal in this real-time multi-player game is world domination through

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You asked us...



Don't extend yourself with email

Q: Your column "Electronic mail" taught me a good lesson: first type my message into my word processor application, then cut and paste it into my email application. This saves me time and keeps the telephone free. One thing I notice is that the message lines are distorted when I send an email or print out any emails I receive. The text doesn't stay in the same format as I typed it. Is this a normal situation or is there any mistake on my part? In case it's important, I am using Eudora Light or Netscape Gold.

Abbas

MacShrink David Rosen replies: There are many reasons why your text looks good on your end (i.e., before you send it) and choppy at the other (i.e., when your intended recipient reads it). First, most email software packages insert line feeds or carriage returns between each separate line of text. When you send me an email message, your text is set in the particular font and size you use. As your message travels from your computer through your Internet service provider (ISP), then the Internet itself, and then finally to me, the message will be chopped up into smaller strings of text and sent to me with a carriage return at the end of each of these lines. When I get the message, my

Macintosh uses the default font for the particular communications application I'm using (either FirstClass, Netscape Navigator, or America Online).

A further complication is that—unlike word processors, which use all sorts of formatting controls to nicely align and display text—email packages generally work with simple ASCII text. By ASCII text, I'm referring to a standard character set that all computers universally understand. These 128 characters include all the common characters, such as the 26 lower case letters, the 26 upper case ones, the numerals, and so on. Behind the scenes, this is known as the "lower ASCII" set, with each character uniquely identified by a number ranging from "0" to "127."

Standard ASCII was good, but computer manufacturers and font developers quickly realized they needed more than the 128 characters. They wanted more, especially funky characters such as a "non-breaking space" or an "em-dash" (essentially, an extra long hyphen). The computer geeks solved this problem by adding another group of 128 characters to the existing ASCII set and calling these characters the "extended" or "upper ASCII" set.

Unfortunately, not everyone could agree on what each number of the extended ASCII set would represent. In fact, very few char-

acters in the extended ASCII set are universally understood or supported by all computers. The number representing a "section marker" on one computer system could mean an "null set symbol" on another. So if you use an extended ASCII character in your email and it turns out your recipient's Mac or PC doesn't use the same character set, their machine has to substitute a different, usually incorrect, character in its place.

This isn't a Mac versus PC problem, but more of an overall personal-computer industry problem: the same incompatibilities can exist from one Mac to another (or from one PC to another). A message created using the extended ASCII characters in one font may not map (or translate) to the same character in a different font. Weird, eh?

So what's the solution to all this craziness? Well, it's important to realize that being an early adopter of technology is always tricky, with lots of annoyances. Second, if you receive a jumbled message, you can go through the document manually and remove the added line feeds, but it's usually easier to use your word processor to search and replace paragraph markers (which cause a line feed).

Finally, you should know that using a commercial service provider, such as AOL, CompuServe, or MSN, can help. For example,

if one AOL member sends another member an email message, not only is the look preserved, but any fonts (assuming the recipient has the particular font), sizes, and even colour are displayed. Of course, this is because keeping a standard is easy in AOL's "gated community" concept. It's a completely different story, however, in the wild streets of the Net.

HmmMMX...

Q: Hello. I am going to put together a new computer and I am really tempted by the great prices on the 166 and 200 MHz non-MMX Intel processors. Will I miss out on much if I get a non-MMX processor? I will be running Warp 4 for most work and dual boot to Win95 for the occasional game or Win32 application. As far as I understand, you need applications that have MMX instructions to take advantage of MMX. Will I discover that I won't be able to run applications down the road without MMX?

Moses

Kevin Linfield responds: As far as I know, no native OS/2 program currently takes advantage of MMX technology. Even in the Windows world, not many programs use these instructions, but if you believe all of the hype, they will in the near future.

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You asked us...



Do you foresee yourself getting heavily into graphics or multimedia before you upgrade your machine again? With today's computer systems, anything you buy today will be obsolete in about six months (a year maximum), so you may be able to put off the MMX decision until your next CPU upgrade. I personally do not see myself getting a MMX chip until the prices have come down significantly.

What the shell?

Q: What is "WPS" that I always see mentioned?

Jerry

Kevin Linfield responds: The WorkPlace Shell (WPS) is the object-oriented desktop environment that OS/2 uses by default. It is OS/2's graphical user interface (GUI), consisting of all of your icons for program objects, shadows, folders, devices, and settings.

Before version 2.0, OS/2 used Program Manager (like Windows 3.x) to launch applications. Once IBM and Microsoft split on OS/2, IBM removed Program Manager from OS/2 and designed the WorkPlace Shell. It is the interface that allows things to be dragged and dropped, it permits programs to be launched just by double clicking on a data file, and interfaces with your keyboard and

mouse to utilize the power of object-oriented computing. It is more than just your desktop.

Zero compression conserves space

Q: In July, you mentioned to set DriveSpace3 to zero percent compression to get rid of waste space. I can't seem to figure out where to find the place to make that change.

Sharon

Alan Zisman responds: Note that any disk compression eliminates cluster waste; setting the compression ratio to 0 percent compression (AKA 1.0 compression ratio or 1-to-1 compression) minimizes the performance loss involved constantly compressing and expanding data.

First thing is to make sure you actually have DriveSpace 3 (DS3)—it's only included with Win95B or the Microsoft Plus Pack add-on. It will be indicated by a little (3) on the DriveSpace icon in the Start Menu. Without DS3, you'll be unable to set the compression ratio.

If you do have DS3, then run DS3 to compress the desired drive. Afterwards, run DS3 again, select your now-compressed drive, and, from the Advanced menu, choose Adjust Ratio. This will let you set the compression ratio to 1.0 (i.e., zero percent compression).

Mad maxing

Q: When I print anything from OS/2 Warp 4, the WarpCenter CPU usage goes to the max and stays there until the printer has received all of the data. The machine is obviously very sluggish for the duration. Is there a setting I can change to make things better?

Tom

Kevin Linfield responds: By default, OS/2 uses polling instead of interrupts to print. This was a result of many sound cards using IRQ 7, which for non-DOS users is normally used for LPT 1. To tell OS/2 to use IRQ printing instead of polled printing, add the switch /IRQ to the end of your DEVICE=PRINT01.SYS line in your CONFIG.SYS. You should also check your settings for your spooler (double click on the Spooler icon in your System Setup folder) to make sure it is enabled and the priority is what you want.

Full duplexing fully perplexing

Q: I just read your reply ("You Asked Us" August 1997 issue) regarding the Duplex Dilemma. In your reply, you say most recent sound cards support full duplex and the Sound Blaster 16 requires it to be specifically turned on using Win95 Control Panel.

I am running Win95 and Sound Blaster 16 Plug and Play and I am trying to use it with

an Internet chat/phone program. I have looked in the Control Panel. Where do you change to full duplex for the sound card in Win95?

Tony

Alan Zisman responds: Make sure you have the newest Creative Labs driver. If you have Web access, go to <http://www.creative-labs.com>, and download and install their latest version. Earlier driver versions lacked this feature. Then, open Control Panel, double-click on the System icon, and choose the Device Manager tab.

Click once on the [+] sign next to Sound, Video, and Game Controllers to open this item up, and select: Creative Sound Blaster 16 Plug and Play. Click on the Properties button.

Go to the Settings tab. On my system, at least, there's an [x] Allow Full-Duplex Operation, along with an explanation. Make sure there is a check-mark for this item, and click OK. ♦

•Send Mac-related questions to MacShrink at MacGuy@tcp.com. All questions become the property of MacShrink™ and David Rosen.

•OS/2 questions should be directed to Kevin Linfield at linfield@torfree.net.

•Send PC-related questions to Alan Zisman at azisman@rogerswave.ca.

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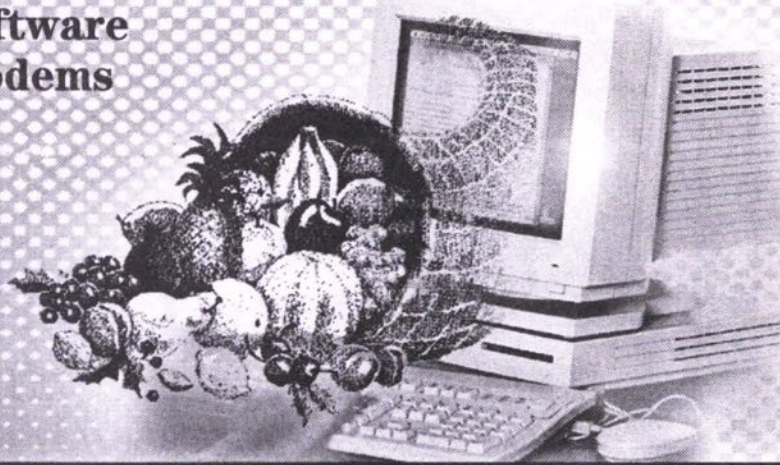
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BY JACQUES SURVEYER

Intel desperately needs something to eat up

all those extra CPU cycles that are going to be available with the new Merced P7 and P8 chips. And 3D virtual reality gaming is

just not going to do the trick. Yikes—an industry that has thrived on product changes roughly keeping pace with Moore's

Law (CPU speed doubling every 18 months for the same price) is suddenly running out of things to do.

Well, Intel should thank Dragon, IBM, and Kurzweil for sticking to their pioneering work on voice-dictation and speech-recognition systems. Discrete speech dictation systems (where...you...speak...with...a...discrete...pause...between...every...word) and continuous dictation systems (no pauses required) are rapidly appearing on the market, they are going from good to very good, and (audible sigh

info box

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of relief from Intel) they eat CPU cycles for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

For example, IBM's discrete speech recognition program, Simply Speaking Gold, requires 16 to 32 MB of memory and at least a Pentium 90 processor. Continuous speech recognition programs like Dragon's Dictate NaturallySpeaking require a Pentium 166 MMX processor with 32 to 64 MB of RAM. And for both systems, the more processing power you throw at them, the better they perform. Now these are serious CPU cycles.

Curiously, the other half of the Wintel monopoly, the boys from Redmond, Wash., doesn't think speech recognition's time has come yet. But Microsoft missed the Internet by about two years, so we'll let you decide if it is about to make another shortsighted blunder.

The case for voice dictation

Last year, we reviewed IBM's VoiceType 3, a discrete speech recognition program with most of the same features as Simply Speaking Gold, but not quite the same speed and accuracy, which was priced at \$990. This, which included no special speech hardware, was a breakthrough in itself. Now continuous speech at roughly the same accuracy (two errors out of 20 words) is available from Dragon Dictate for \$695. And IBM's Simply Speaking Gold has a slew of new features, such as text-to-speech, expanded user vocabulary, and friendlier macro setup, plus direct menu link into MS Word. Its price is \$145. The price of voice dictation is rapidly dropping.

And the improvement in accuracy and reliability is steadily increasing. My VoiceType 3 accuracy leveled out at about

continued on page 49

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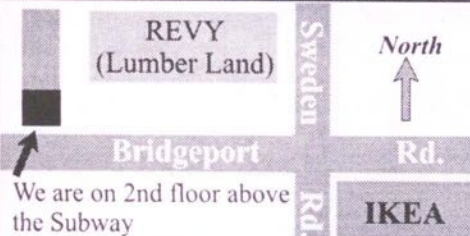
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Voice Recognition

continued from page 46

three errors every 20 words dictated at about 40 to 45 words per minute. Given that my best typing rate is about 25 to 30 words per minute with about seven errors for every 20 words typed, this was a distinct improvement. So I was an early adopter of voice dictation.

There is another advantage in using voice, though. Both your eyes and hands are free to roam—leafing through papers or texts, talking with others (mute switch on mic helps here), inserting diskettes, even moving about (long mic cord helps here). Let me tell you, it has transformed writing from being a chore to a pleasure again.

So what does Simply Speaking Gold buy me? The ability to have my writing read back to me while I poke around the room. Distinctly faster typing—about 50 words per minute—at roughly the same error rate. The ability to voice-control my computer with DOS and Windows commands.

Enter the Dragon

Given that IBM will have a continuous speech program out in mid-October called ViaVoice selling for about \$250, I was somewhat reluctant to consider Dragon Dictate NaturallySpeaking for \$695. My mistake. Dragon Dictate provides true continuous dictation (hence, the NaturallySpeaking name) and the accuracy and speed are even better than Simply Speaking Gold. I am averaging between 50 and 80 words per minute with errors steadily dropping from three for every 20 words dictated to two errors in 20. This is great.

I attribute these better results to three factors. First, the microphone that comes with Dragon Dictate is better—it fits more comfortably, clears my mustache with more room to spare and has a battery powered amplifier. Let me tell you, the better the microphone, the faster and more accurate your speech dictation.

Second, Dragon provides three ways for its system to learn your voice. First, there is the training (IBM calls it enrollment). The initial time is roughly the same—about 45 minutes of easy reading for both Dragon and IBM. But Dragon allows you to continue training later; and I have taken another 40 minutes to get Dragon better-trained. Also, unlike IBM, I can train Dragon for specific words it consistently makes errors on—i.e., “called” instead of “of,” for some strange reason.

Finally, Dragon includes a vocabulary-builder program. Point the program at a directory with files containing typical text that you might dictate and it spruces up its dictionaries and vocabulary list.

Now, of course, Dragon will claim it is all due to superior speech algorithms, and so on—but we anxiously await the appearance of ViaVoice from IBM and the next

Kurzweil continuous speech program (due in early 1998) now that the company has merged with Belgian speech/dictation specialist LauherHauptpage. In the meantime,

you can talk to your computer with greater speed and accuracy than you type to your computer. It's not “HAL speaks” yet, but prospects are getting better by the year. ♦

Jacques Surveyer is a consultant and photographer; you can “talk” to him at <http://home.inforamp.net/~jbsurv>

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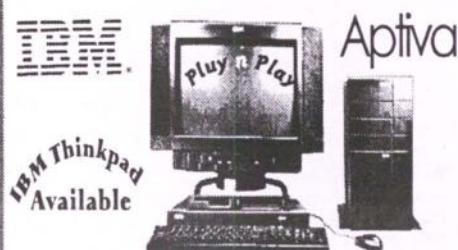
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Handheld HPs

continued from page 34

installed in ROM), plus Pocket Word, Pocket Excel, and several productivity applications. Unique to the system is a backup and restore

utility that will work with optional memory cards—the system has a CompactFlash slot as well as the PCMCIA slot.

The price includes a cradle, A/C adapter, and serial cable, all of which are often extra-cost

options with competing units. They make synchronizing with a desktop computer a painless exercise—just slip the 320LX into the cradle and let the software do its work, then press a button to pop the unit free for mobile operations.

The HP 320LX was worth the wait. ♦

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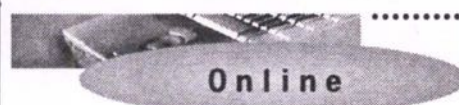
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All the news that's fit to download

Mix of information delivery services a boon to Net newshounds

BY CLIFF CUNNINGHAM

The power of the Internet is its ability to inform, and the vehicle energized by it is customized news. With the explosive growth of push technology, the era has now arrived when it is possible to cancel your newspaper subscription without giving up your newspaper.

For the past few months this writer has been sampling a wide array of news-delivery sites, with a view to assessing how fast they are in posting breaking news, how rich they are in multimedia content, and how useful they are in a somewhat more subjective way.

In one test, I closely followed the last British election. For solid journalistic integrity, nothing surpasses *The Times of London* site, the newspaper I read each morning, although *The Guardian* site also offered excellent coverage. On election night, CNN site offered a live audio-video feed, and although the video quality was hardly up to television standards, it is a taste of the future.

For pure multimedia content, however, Britain's ITN television site offered the finest material. Shortly after Prime Minister Tony Blair's victory speech in front of a huge throng in the wee hours of the morning London time, ITN had a 360-degree view of the event. By moving the mouse you could pan around, up and down the scene while listening to a simultaneous Real Audio feed of the music and crowd.

It takes time

Aside from live audio/video feeds, do not expect fast-breaking news to hit the Web quickly. For example, when the space shuttle undocked from the Mir space station on May 21 at 9:04 p.m. EDT, the story was not posted to the CNN Web site until 1:20 a.m. on May 22. During the election, the BBC coverage I was watching on television was ahead of any Web postings by at least 30 minutes.

For more up-to-date news, consider listening to the radio on the Web. Turn your browser to <http://audionet.com> for a complete offering of 140 radio stations and a host of audio material, including historical recordings. Canadians can choose from several local stations or the CBC at <http://radio.cbc.ca>, where you can listen to a live audio feed, or an

hourly news report.

Microsoft is planning to create local arts-and-entertainment content for major Canadian cities, but that content will be folded into the subscription-only MSN Canada service. To get an idea of how a similar service is already working, look at Metromix, a site hosted in part by *The Chicago Tribune*. It includes information on movies, restaurants, clubs and sports. Future versions will be multimedia-driven, with audio clips for upcoming concerts and video clips of movies.

The Toronto company Lanacom offers Headliner, a great push product that features a scrolling tickertape with news items from any of the scores of online newspapers or magazines you can subscribe to for free. Alternatively, it can function as a screen-saver. Clicking on any of the scrolling items launches your browser with the article. You can switch to different categories, such as business, computing, news and science, and instead of waiting for the tickertape, you can click on the icon for whatever newsfeed is scrolling to see a list of all the articles on offer.

Everyone likes talking about the weather, so a look at The Weather Network is a must. It offers up-to-the-hour readings and forecasts for most urban areas in Canada.

Desktop delivery

Getting to the weather page is just a click away when you install NetDelivery, another push product that lets you subscribe to a variety of publications. Its main problem now is a paucity of publications; the science option, for example, has several categories but only two of them contain any material. It does, however, let you "subscribe" to any Web page, whether it is a news site or not. Updates can be delivered to you at a specified interval.

Another must-see site is TotalNews. Its basic interface lets you access such news sites as Fox, MSNBC, CNN, ABC, CBS, *USA Today*, *Time*, and National Public Radio. The latter, NPR, is a great source for audio news. The story in late May about comet-like objects delivering water to Earth was covered in text format by all the major Web sites, but NPR featured an audio report and an interview with the scientist who made the discovery, and another scientist who was a skeptic. It was far superior to just reading about the issue.

PeakJet speeds up the World Wide Wait

PeakJet

From: Peak Technologies

For: Win95/NT

Price: US\$29

To use the Web is to continually fight against the fourth dimension: time. You may upgrade your modem to a new one that promises twice the speed (although rarely delivering quite that much). You can invest in higher-speed access with an ISDN phone line, a cable modem from Rogers or other companies, or even a satellite link. But no matter how fast your modem and connection, you're like a salmon swimming upstream against the current...in this case, competing against the millions of other Internet users all trying to connect to the same sites.

No matter your modem speed or connection speed, you'll still find yourself staring at "Server Found: Waiting to Connect" messages. And when you've downloaded that page, click on a link and you'll find yourself staring at that message all over again.

PeakJet (formerly marketed as NetJet) by Peak Technologies can help—not by making your Web connection faster, but by making it smarter.

Cache and carry on

You may be aware that your browser—whether Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer—already has a cache. Using this cache, your browser stores the pages you've visited. That way, if you return to a page, perhaps using your browser's Back button, you don't need to wait to reload it.

PeakJet doesn't replace your browser, it simply replaces the fairly basic cache with its smarter version, which not only stores the pages you've already visited, but also tries to store the pages that you haven't gotten to yet. It doesn't do this by reading your mind.

Instead, the Peak Technologies folks found that most of the time, when we surf the Net, our modem sits idle. It's only in operation about 30 percent of the time, on average. The rest of the time, we're reading a page, and the modem is waiting for our next command.

With PeakJet installed, while you're reading a Web page, your modem is busy checking out the links on the page, and storing the text on those pages in its intelligent cache (give it enough time, and it will start to get the graphics, too).

It does this on the not-unwarranted assumption that fairly often, you'll choose to click on one of the links on that page. When you do, instead of waiting once again to connect, you'll find the page is already stored on your hard drive, ready to read.

Out with the idle

And because the cache is intelligent, it learns from your browsing. As its cache fills up, it needs to get rid of some of the stored pages to make room. While your browser's cache simply dumps the oldest files, PeakJet's replacement factors in how often you've returned to those pages; it dumps the files that have been the least used.

As a result, the more you browse with PeakJet, the better it works.

A simple and inexpensive solution that really works, as long as you're prepared for the somewhat disconcerting sense of your modem buzzing away all on its own. Sort of like the much-hyped Web Push, only this version brings you what you actually want before you ask for it. —Alan Zisman

Site seeing:

Peak Technologies,
<http://www.peak-media.com>

previous versions, PeakJet increases your modem utilization, because it grabs linked pages while you are reading. It works best with text-only pages, or those with few graphics, which is a typical description of online newspapers. I find it to be a major time-saver. ♦

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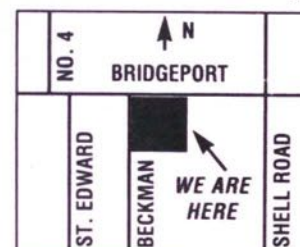
One last thing, even though some Web sites have banned it because of its constant demands, PeakJet is a great utility for news hounds. Much improved from

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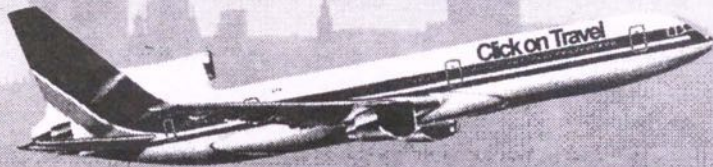
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Windows NT in a Nutshell:
A Desktop Quick Reference
for System Administrators

Author: Eric Pearce,
Publisher: O'Reilly & Associates.

ISBN: 1-56592-251-4.

Price: \$28.95.

Documentation that comes with Windows NT is practically non-existent. The separately purchased Windows NT Resource Kit consists of three fat volumes. Thus, you either get no information, or have to pay a chunk of money and wade through vast quantities of paper to find the tidbit you need to administer your NT system. What's a busy system administrator in search of NT help to do?

Try grabbing a handy little volume published by O'Reilly & Associates: *Windows NT in a Nutshell*. A member of the highly acclaimed "Nutshell" series, this little book packs more condensed information into its 350-odd pages than many manuals squeeze into several times that many.

In seven chapters and several appendices, author Eric Pearce provides instructions on how to perform both common and uncommon tasks on Windows NT servers or workstations. The book is directed at users of Windows NT 4.0, and includes full menu trees and command descriptions.

It's designed as a quick reference, so you won't find extensive tutorials, but there are enough examples to guide you through most tasks, and some unexpected background that illuminates the more confusing functions. Pearce is a networking specialist, so his discussions of these aspects of NT are especially useful.

The Chapter 7, *Uncommon Sense*, is particularly informative, since it describes all sorts of things that are non-intuitive to the casual user, such as the idiosyncrasies of browsing on an NT network. And, as well as a normal, topical index, there's a "task index" that tells you what tools and commands you'd use to perform specific functions.

This book isn't the only NT reference you should own—it wasn't meant to be. But as a starting point that aims you in the right direction, *Windows NT in a Nutshell* can't be beat.—Lynn Greiner

The Teach Yourself series

Publisher: Sams Publishing

Price: \$28.95 to \$84.95

Are you sick of those thick computer books that promise, in only 700 or so pages, to show you that a particular software application is really very simple? They tend to be either insultingly childish or full of coding so complex you have to be an expert just to read the book. There's no need to let confusion or frustration reign anymore. Breathe a sigh of relief and check out the *Teach Yourself* series from Sams Publishing.

These books may be thick, but they are well laid out, easy to understand, and useful. As you may have guessed, any books with *Teach Yourself* in the title must contain lessons, complete with quizzes and exercises. Don't let this worry you, as these lessons show you exactly what you want to know in

a way that you'll understand.

For example, when you're "teaching yourself HTML 3.2 in 24 hours" using the book, you want to know about *Linking to Another Web Page*, *Transferring Pages to a Web Server*, and *Putting Images on a Web Page*. That's why each of those is the title of a section of the book. All the books in the series use real English words and explain any necessary coding as they go along.

Part of the title of each book is a measurement of time so you have an idea of how long it will take you to finish all the lessons.

The *Teach Yourself...in 24 Hours* books are reserved for basic concepts and easier subjects, such as PowerPoint 97, HTML 3.2, and Windows 95. For topics that different people use for vastly different purposes, such as "the Internet," you can choose the quick 24 Hours version or go into greater detail with the Week version.

Most of the 24 Hours titles are priced at \$28.95, while the other titles, which suggest a Week, 14 Days, or 21 Days to teach yourself the topic, range anywhere from \$34.95 to \$84.95. Price appears to vary depending on the difficulty of the subject matter and inclusion (or not) of a CD-ROM.

Overviews and detailed tables of contents help the reader stay on top of what's coming up. The appendices provide some good supplementary information, such as sources, summaries, or quick references, and indices. A glossary in each book would have been helpful, even though technical words are explained in the text throughout the books.

One of my favourites in the series is *Teach Yourself Great Web Design in a Week*. I admire it because it practices what it preaches. The book itself is well designed with a powerful use of colour, consistent text and graphic placement, and effective messages. The reader is shown all sorts of bad design, along with explanations of what makes each example bad.

Each book in the series is divided into separate lessons so that you don't have to learn everything all at once. What's more, the lessons have a particular purpose. You have a feeling of accomplishment every time you come away from the computer.

Learning Java on your own is a daunting proposition. Taking it in gradually over 21 days, however, makes the task far more manageable. Setting aside one day for introduction and familiarization, one day for learning about object-oriented programming, and one day for Java basics before even starting to work with objects can help almost anyone take control of the software.

Overall, these books do the job that software manuals should have done years ago—taking the reader step by step through a particular subject, from the basics, through specific capabilities, to the more complex features. Whether you use a *Teach Yourself* book on its own or to supplement a course, your chosen topic will become easier to master with the well-organized and understandable guide.—Caryn Mladen

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Books

Net Benefits: Beyond the Technology and Down to the Bottom Line

Author, Publisher: Kim Elton

Price: By arrangement with author

Net Benefits, written and published by Bowen Island's Kim Elton, is an unusual book with an unusual marketing concept.

It is written for managers and those responsible for the vision and direction of their companies.

Elton says "It's not a 'how-to', it's a 'why-to.'" Computer techies and dedicated surfers will find little here to interest them, but the businessperson will find a wealth of practical information on using the Internet for sales and marketing.

Although this book may soon be available in bookstores, Elton is currently marketing it to businesses that want to promote their own Internet initiatives by offering the book to their clients as a premium or gift. The cover design can accommodate a company logo. BCTV and Karo Design are among the first Vancouver companies to use this take advantage of the marketing strategy. —June Campbell

Email: kim@netbenefits.org

http://www.netbenefits.org

The Dilbert Future:

Thriving On Stupidity in the 21st Century

Author: Scott Adams

Publisher: HarperCollins

Price: \$35.50

The Dilbert Future, the latest non-cartoon book from humourist Scott Adams, is immensely entertaining and frighteningly convincing. You'll chuckle at the ridiculous future developments he suggests, until you realize he's most likely correct. Then you'll cry, whack your head on your desk, and give up hope for any sort of real "progress" for the human race.

The Dilbert Future examines probable and improbable technological and social developments as they will relate to work and play. Adams makes 65 "predictions," mostly twisted. For example, "In the future, there will be a huge market for technology products that help workers goof off and still get paid" and "In the future, the most important career skill will be a lack of ethics."

For instance, Adams opines that life in the future will not be like *Star Trek*, because "Star Trek does not take into account the stupidity, selfishness, and horniness of the average human being." He has a point. Take the holodeck. A marvelous educational tool, right? As Dogbert explains, "when virtual reality gets cheaper than dating, society is doomed."

Adams has a lot of funny and cogent things to say about more current technology as well. Particularly cutting are his remarks about the NC (network computer) versus PC debate. He summarizes that: "The NC is blah, blah, Java, blah, blah, trying to screw Microsoft, blah, blah, no hard disk, blah, blah, Larry Ellison."

He goes on to to puncture the idea that computer users would prefer such a low-cost, functional, but low-prestige solution, with a single word: Yugo. A typical NC user, Adams figures, will be someone who "thinks that a

computer would look lovely with the furniture and wants to 'check out that Internet' someday..."

The final section of the book takes a turn

for the weird, as Adams seemingly gets serious and expounds on a "daily affirmation" system for getting reality to cooperate with your aspirations. He claims this system

helped him become a best-selling cartoonist. It's a jarring departure from the rest of the book. Then again, it's hard to argue with his success. —William A. Wood

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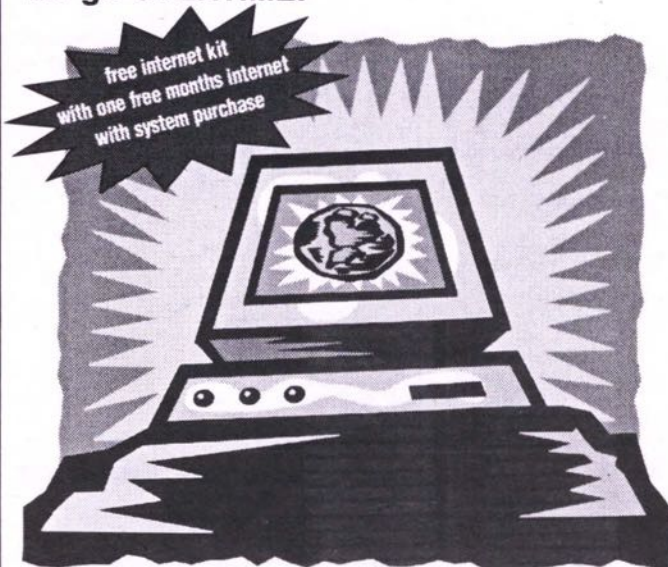
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Computer assistance for the disabled

BY LEE LESTER

Handicapped. Disabled. Physically challenged. Whatever description is used, the fact remains that many computer users have difficulty operating their machines. They may have to overcome poor vision, even blindness, or fingers or arms that do not work properly, or are missing. Fortunately, there are programs and gadgets that can, in many cases, help.

Large print, screen magnifiers, and larger monitors have been available on the Windows and Macintosh platforms for years. There are Braille and large-print key labels, as well.

Keeping up with the Internet Age, the September *MacWay Digest* reported an announcement for the following World Wide Web text browser on the Scout Report's Web page:

"A beta version of MacLynx, a product created for Macintosh, is out for review. The most notable feature, which has been drawing attention to this product, is its ability to speak entire Web pages or pronounce the current link through Speech Manager. This program was developed by the University of Kansas and the

LYNX-DEV team, who also developed the original Lynx browser. MacLynx also features drag-and-drop capabilities, supports various helper applications, contains an external image viewer, and more...

"To take advantage of this browser's unique speech capabilities, simply activate Mac OS Speech Manager, select Print by typing 'p,' and select the option to have a page spoken."

Machheads are not the only ones to have aids of this kind. Windows users can also find many programs to help them overcome their difficulties. The visually impaired are probably the most catered to. Thus, text-to-speech programs have been around for quite a while. IBM's Screen Reader/DOS even assists pre-Windows users with their older computers.

Turnabout is fair play

Now, for helping those with keyboarding difficulties, the emphasis is more on speech-to-text, with IBM among the leaders. Its recently released Simply Speaking and Simply Speaking Gold are proclaimed as "IBM's enhanced-speech solution for people who'd rather talk than type." They enable Windows 95 and NT users to dictate "eyes-free without

watching for errors or stopping to make corrections." Corrections can be made by speaking instead of clicking or typing.

Optical character recognition (OCR) programs and scanners to input documents are another resource.

Not all help comes from software. A large-capacity hard drive can save inserting CD-ROMs or floppies each time you want to access a file or program. Headpointing devices that move the cursor around or use on-screen keyboards, mouthsticks, or specially adapted keyboards can help those who have lost their arms or the use of their hands. There is even a one-hand keyboard produced by a Toronto company.

Both Mac and Windows users can control cursor speeds. Other aids include trackballs, which are easier to control than mice. Also, Apple says a Dvorak keyboard layout is "easier, faster, and probably less injurious than the normal QWERTY type."

On the go

There is even help for users of portable computers. enLarge is a low-vision aid for Newton users. Fat Cursors enlarges the cursor for PowerBook users. Also for Mac users is

Speak2Me, which says the names of icons in the finder as they are selected.

Not to be overlooked is the computer's ability to do things for the disabled. With X10 control devices, burglar alarms, appliances, and lights can be switched on or off throughout the household without leaving your computer. And, of course, the computer can be used as both a telephone and message centre.

Few things can totally overcome a disability. But, meantime, the lot of the handicapped can and is being made much easier through the number and variety of computer aids now available, much of it as free- or shareware. ♦

Site seeing:

Lynx, <http://lynx.browser.org>
MacLynx Beta,
<http://www.lirmm.fr/~gutkneco/maclynx>
Scout Report,
<http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/scout/report>
<http://rs.internic.net/scout/report>

The following Web sites contain a wealth of information about helpful devices and programs. They also lead to many other resources:

<http://www.can.ibm.com/specialneeds>
<http://www.apple.com/disability.welcome>

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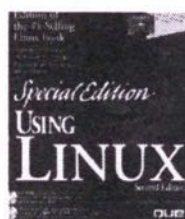
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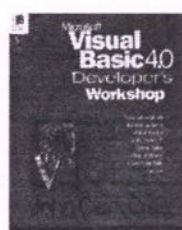
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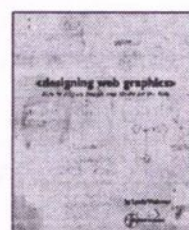
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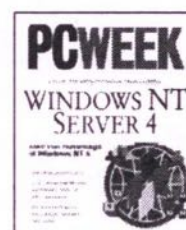
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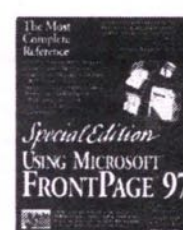
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The black box that is Linux

BY ALAN THWAITS

How would you like to run a multiuser, multitasking operating system (OS) on your old 386 boat anchor? Does the idea of having a powerful, fully configured graphical user interface and window-managing system that takes up only 4 MB of system memory turn you on? What if I told you this particular OS supports a broad range of video and audio cards, CD-ROM drives, disk drives, and other devices? And that it's powerful—in fact, with a reasonably fast processor and a decent amount of RAM, it will perform as well as, or better than, a Unix workstation?

Sounds good, doesn't it? Ready to go out and buy a copy, just to check it out? Well, here's the kicker—you don't have to buy it, it's free!

This isn't just the fantasy of someone fed up with bloatware and expensive upgrades—although it's welcome news to anyone who's had those fantasies—but a real, live OS that may be the best thing to hit personal computing since the arrival of silicon. I'm talking, of course, about Linux, a Unix clone that's freely distributed on the Internet. There are commercial distributions of Linux as well, which you'll have to pay for, but it's possible to get everything you need for Linux via the Web and FTP.

What is Linux? Well, I'm going to tell you.

Beginning at the beginning

The Linux story is a delightful mix of computing chutzpah, cyberspace cooperation, and functional muscle. Linux was first written in 1991 by a Finnish graduate student named Linus Torvalds. He distributed it via the Net, making the kernel and source code available for free. Linux was further developed by a loosely knit team of hackers across the Net. The result, only a few years later, is a worldwide community of Linux users (estimated at some six million people), who use it to operate desktop workstations, program in languages like Perl and C++, and run robust and stable networks. In fact, a glance behind the scenes at many Internet service providers (ISPs) in Canada and elsewhere will reveal Linux hard at work.

Linux aims towards POSIX (portable operating system interface) compliance, which means it has all the features you'd expect in a full Unix OS, including true multi-tasking, virtual memory, shared libraries, demand

loading, shared copy-on-write executables, proper memory management, and TCP/IP networking. It runs mainly on 386/486/586-based PCs, using the hardware facilities of the 386 processor family to implement these features.

To try out Linux, you'll need a 386, 486, or 586 box, with at least 2 MB of RAM, and a single floppy. To do anything really useful, though, more RAM is the answer (isn't it always?). The 4 MB is needed to install most full Linux distributions, and 8 MB is highly recommended for running the X-Windows environment—and a hard disk is required. Linux runs happily on 386-family based laptops, with X-Windows working well on most of them.

Note that Linux will never run fully on an 8086 or 286, because it requires task-switching and memory management facilities not found on these processors. A project is underway to port Linux to suitable 68000-series based systems, such as Amigas and Ataris, and there's a port to the PowerPC.

Going it alone

The other things you'll need to run Linux are patience, a little nerve, and a willingness to play. You will, after all, be configuring your very own operating system, without relying on any of the prepackaged solutions provided by Silicon Valley.

Installing Linux means having to match drivers to devices, which in turn means figuring out exactly which Linux tool you'll need for your system. That can be a labourious process, and the learning curve is guaranteed to be steep for a while.

The good news is that help is never far away—Linux is in continuous development, and everyone's a newbie at some time. That means excellent user groups, as well as FAQs, how-to guides, and Usenet newsgroups devoted to Linux.

If you're not keen on assembling from free downloads from the Net, numerous Linux packages are commercially available at reasonable prices. These make installing and configuring Linux easy for anyone who's willing to pay some attention to what's in the box on the desk and where things are supposed to go. ♦

Site seeing:

The Linux FAQ, <http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/users/iwj10/linux-faq>
Linux Online, <http://www.linux.org>
El Weasel's Beginner's Linux Page, <http://www.ghg.net/crholmstrom/linux.html>

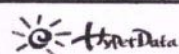
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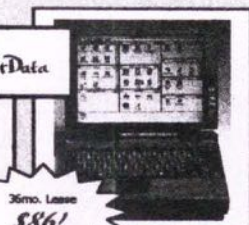
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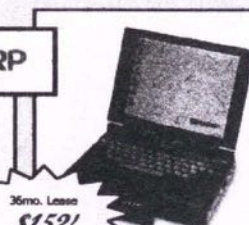


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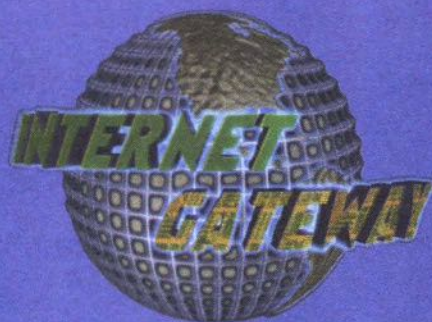
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再論電子郵件

作者：林啓清(JimLin)

一、前言

在網際網路上您可以擁有多個假名，假名紛飛是Internet上的一個特有現象！

所以，在您要申請一個新的Internet帳戶時，大多有人會建議您不要用您的真名來當您的帳戶名稱(一般來說，帳戶名稱就是您的電子郵件地址)？

乍聽之下好像很有道理，但是仔細一分析，就能發現其中的矛盾之處？

筆者提出以下問題：

1) 用假名是不是就可以為所欲為，而不會被發現自己真實身份？

筆者的答案是否定的。不管您用真名或是假名，都可以透過

ISP而得到您的真實身份資料的。所以，當您一開始用假名時，是不是代表您有做壞事的企圖呢？

2) 用假名是不是比較不會被騷擾？

筆者的答案也是否定的。因為騷擾者並不會因為您用假名就不會騷擾您的？

而用真名的好處則有：

1) 很容易從您的電子郵件知道您的名字。

這對於熟朋友用處很大。例如我朋友不知道(或者忘記了)我的電子郵件地址，但是依稀記得我是使用那家ISP？那他就可以依照這個線索寫信來試試看了？

我的名字是JimLin，而我的ISP是Intergate，所以可以猜我的電子郵件的地址是jimlin@intergate.bc.ca(這真的是我的電子郵件地址)。

2) 讓收信者覺得您是一位正派的人。

由對方的電子郵件可以知道對方是不是壞人？如果對方的電子郵件地址是很奇怪的名稱，像goddam....??之類的，可能都是來意不善？

電子郵件的地址首重易記，取名字應該讓對方容易記，而不是取一個跟自己一點關係都沒有名字來考驗首次與您寫信的人....:-)

取假名如果人家還是能知道您的真實身份，那假名還有啥意義可言呢？

在臺灣流行著一個笑話：

某位台商在大陸叫雞，被查獲後在台胞證上蓋上「淫蟲」兩字。該位台商怕返家被老婆看到，便花錢走後門請大陸方面幫忙在台胞證上動手腳？

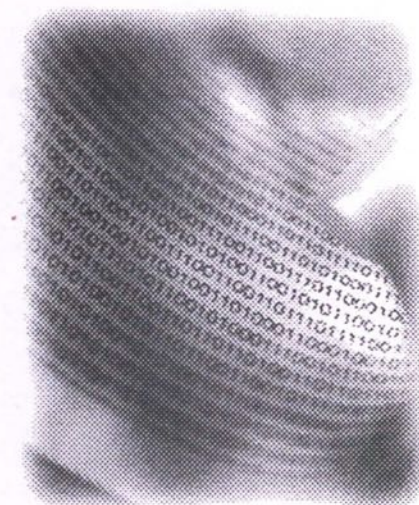
後來，拿到台胞證一看，在淫蟲上面被加蓋了「不是」兩字....:-)

筆者的意思是，做事要有意義，應儘量少做沒有意義的事！

二、何謂電子郵件

電子郵件(E-Mail)就是指某份以數位形式存在的訊息，能透過電腦網路傳送到收件者的手中。

這種郵件一定會有固定的收件人，且您所能送信的主機(Host)必須事先申請，申請完成後，您就會有一個自己的網路郵遞位址(一般人所指的E-Mail就是指這種)。這種信件傳送，正情形下只透過兩部郵件伺服器主機(Mail Server)，也就是您這端的郵件伺



服主機及收信人端的郵件伺服器主機來對傳信件。

當您將寫好的電子郵件送到您的郵件伺服器主機(ISP端)那邊後，您的任務就算是完成了。而您傳電子郵件給郵件伺服器主機時，所使用的協定稱為SMTP(Simple Mail Transfer Protocol)。如果您不是使用這種協定來傳送，郵件主機則無法接收您所送來的訊息(信件內容)。

而當有人寫信給您時，您又得使用POP3(Post Office Protocol version 3)從您的郵件伺服器主機上來下傳屬於您的電子郵件。

所以，當您在送完電子郵件後，剛好也順便收回自己的電子郵件之際，您已經使用了兩種信件傳送協定(SMTP及POP3)，只是全部由您所使用的郵件編輯軟體所代勞了，所以您感覺不出您在短短的幾秒鐘內用了兩種不同的協定。

一般來講，在大部份的郵件軟體的SMTP Server或POP3 Server的地址您可以不必寫，因為郵件軟體本身會自動從您的Mail Address(一定要寫)中抓Server的位址出來用的？除非您的ISP使用與Domain Name不同的郵件主機位址？

不管是SMTP或POP3都是屬於沒有安全性控管的通訊協定(Protocol)，尤其是以SMTP Server最容易騙，所以要假造別人的電子郵件是非的簡單？

上面講了許多，也許很多人都會直接跳過，心想我又看不懂，這又跟我沒關係？事實上，就是跟讀者們有很大的關係，所以筆者才會一而再的提起。

不要嫌筆者煩，知道這些事，對於您在Internet上寫信是絕對有幫助的哦！



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三、一般人問的問題

以下為筆者遇到的幾個讀者寫信問的問題：

1) 如我一寫信，對方是不是馬上能收到？

遇到這個問題，答是或否都不對？必須先知道是什麼樣的情況才行？

如果已經確定信已送出(送給自己的ISP)，那麼該信會在幾秒內被傳送到收信人的ISP那邊，但收信人不會馬上收到？

如果寄信人(您)只是寫好信存起來，沒有寄出，那麼誰都收不到您的信？

如果信已經確定寄出，而且也沒有在幾分鐘後被退回，那可以肯定信已經到收件人的ISP那裡了，只要收件人連上ISP且啟動郵件收取程式，就可以從他的ISP那裡收到您所寫給他的信了？

如果收件人只是連上他的ISP，但是並沒有啟動郵件收取程式(或是沒有啟動自動檢查郵件)，那他一樣收不到信的。

也就是說，一定要收件人用郵件收取程式去他的ISP那裡收信才可以的。

2) 為什麼我寫信給人，都沒人回信這個問題是許多初學者所遇到的問題？

用現實的環境來當個例子——→您寫信給朋友，但是您的收件人地址寫錯，您認為您的朋友能不能回信給您呢？

在Internet上也一樣的，當您的寫信程式的設定是錯誤的，就算您寫再多的信給您的朋友，您的朋友也無法回信，因為您朋友寫給您的信都被退回了，無法寄到您的手上哦！

那要如何確定自己的寫信程式設定有

沒有錯呢？

很簡單，您只要寫一封電子郵件給自己，寄出去後，約五秒鐘去收信，您應該就會收到剛才您寫給自己的信了？

然後，您回信(選Reply)給剛才收到那封信，此時郵件程式就會把寄件人的郵件地址當成您的收件人地址(您不需要重打)，如果當初的寄件人地址是錯的，您這封信一寄出就會被退回了？

如果真的要退回來，怎麼辦？

只有一個辦法，重新設定您的郵件處理程式，不會設的話，找朋友幫忙吧！

3) 為什麼我寫中文信給人家，別人都看不懂？

這個問題很簡單。如果不是您的郵件處理程式無法寄中文信，那就是您的郵件處理程式的設定有問題？請試著把裡面的Quoted Printable的功能關掉？

四、結語

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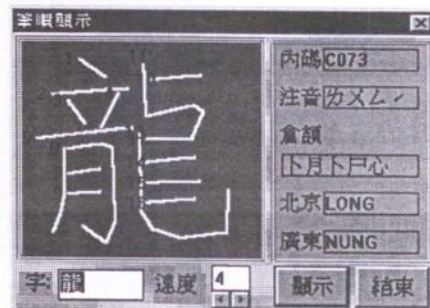
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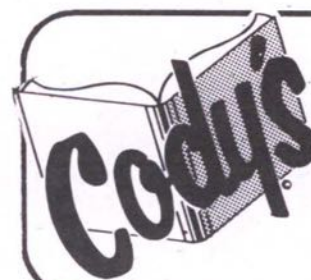
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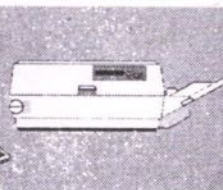
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Trends in digital image-taking

BY JACQUES SURVEYER

I remember a B-movie from the Cold War era entitled *The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming*. The photography world is taking up a similar panicky cry of "the digitals are coming, the digitals are coming." New digital cameras and digital video camcorders are mushrooming onto the marketplace. Well, just as the Russian invasion movie was a comic farce, there are some strange twists in the digital-camera field that deserve attention.

There are a number of trends emerging in the new digital world of photography. The first is the convergence of digital-recording equipment. Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference between a digital still camera and a digital video camera. The new Hitachi digital cameras, for example, might as well be called digital video cameras; they're able to store five to 20 minutes of continuous digital images, depending on the resolution and colour fidelity required.

The bulk of digital cameras take still images (i.e., single photographs) exclusively, but most digital video recorders now have a still-image recording option. So one of the questions we will look into is how good are the digital video cameras/camcorders, versus digital still cameras, versus good old-fashioned 35 mm film images.

The second major trend is the rapid change in the costs of printing quality colour digital images.

Finally, the third trend is the changing costs in the means of storing and transferring images from camera to computer.

As it turns out, all of these concerns are interrelated, so we shall touch on each here.

Quality comparisons

How good are digital video camera/camcorder images versus a mid-price digital still camera? Well, we used a \$3,700 Sony DCR-PC7 Handycam digital video camcorder versus the \$1,400 Kodak DC120 digital still camera.

The Sony Handycam sports 10x natural or 120x digital zoom lens, 30- or 60-minute recording tapes, the ability to shoot video or

still photos, and a 300KB charged-coupled device (CCD) sensor that provides about 500 lines of resolution. The Kodak DC120 sports a 3x zoom lens, storage for two or 10 high-resolution images (1,200x1,000 pixels, but there are also three lower resolution settings), plus CCD arrays for the 1,200x1,000 pixel resolution images. The Handycam is lighter and more compact by about 40 percent than the DC120.

When we went to take pictures with the two cameras, the Handycam's video or still photo was much more convenient to operate than the Kodak DC120. DC120's LCD display screen was smaller and less colour faithful than the Handycam's bright LCD. Both LCD screens accelerated battery drain by two or three times, however.

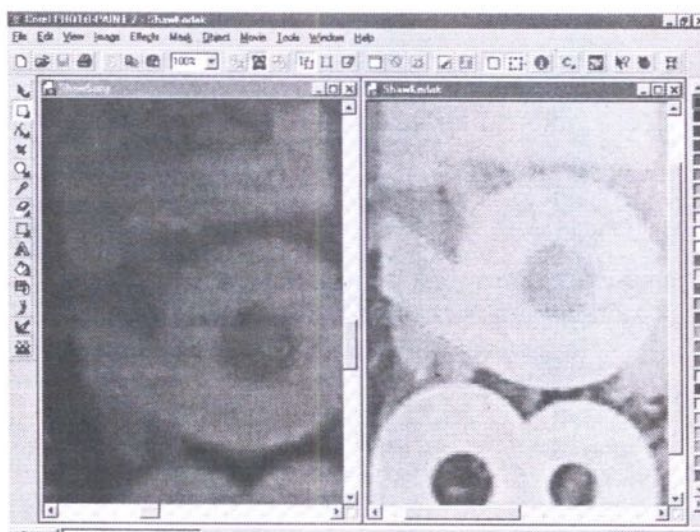
When taking the highest resolution images with the DC120, there was an annoying delay of about half a second between shutter click and image capture, plus a three to four second delay before the next image could be taken—versus half that with the Handycam (and no delays in video mode). Likewise, in dark or high-contrast lighting conditions, the DC120 refused to shoot, whereas the Handycam's auto brightness control was able to record (but with reduced sharpness). So, advantage Handycam for image-taking.

Transfer trials

Getting the image from camera to computer was another story. For all practical purposes, to get useful images out of the DC120, users should buy the 10 MB flash card with the PC Card adapter (\$375) and the AC/DC power adapter and power cord (\$94). This not only allows for more high-resolution images, but

also reduces the image transfer time dramatically (at least for notebook users who have PC Card slots built in) and allows for battery-free operation in studio settings.

Transferring a high-resolution image from the DC120 using its serial port hookup took four-and-a-half minutes (versus about a minute using the \$200 Snappy to capture images from the Handycam onto any computer with any open parallel port). But using the PC Card, the transfer could be accomplished in about 20-30 seconds including setup time. So for \$400 extra, the DC120 goes from mutt to pedigree in image transfers.



The DC120's 1,200x1,000 images (right) are clearly better than the Handycam's (left) highest resolution images imported using the Snappy screen capture unit.

Capture concerns

As for the quality of the captured images, advantage again goes to the DC120. In general, sharpness and colour fidelity of the DC120's 1,200x1,000 images are clearly better than the highest resolution (1,500x1,125) images imported from the Handycam using the Snappy screen capture unit. When I switched to a Miro capture card, colour fidelity for the Sony Handycam was distinctly improved—sometimes bettering the Kodak DC120; but sharpness of image was still an advantage of the DC120.

Only in sunny or mildly cloudy daylight conditions could the highest quality

Handycam images come consistently close to those of the DC120. However, recall that in some low light and high contrast conditions, the DC120 just balked at taking any picture at all (or in manual mode, the results were very poor).

Picking a "winner"

So which do you choose—digital video, digital still, or 35 mm. If you are like me, and do a lot of image manipulation with programs such as Corel PhotoPaint 7 or Adobe Photoshop, then the image-taking convenience and the more than adequate resolution of the Sony Handycam will meet your needs. If you need natural, sharp images, then the picture gets murky.

If 200 dpi is the lowest quality image you will publish, then the DC120 can produce up to about 6 x 5 inch images. A 35 mm camera will consistently produce higher resolution images and in a wider range of lighting conditions, however. And some people don't mind paying just over a dollar a picture for the convenience of getting the images stored on CD (plus a slide or negative) done for them. The cost of producing digital prints, on the other hand, has changed for the worse.

Even though inkjet printer prices have dropped while their resolution and colour fidelity have improved dramatically, their equally dramatic rise in ink and paper costs substantially reduce the cost advantages of digital prints. True, other digital printers, such as colour lasers have dropped their per-colour page costs to that of inkjets; but \$3,500 to \$8,000 purchase prices are not insubstantial.

Picturing the competition

Finally, each camp is acutely aware of what the other is doing—Kodak, for that matter, is in both the digital still and 35 mm camps. So what makes imminent sense today may not be worth two cents six months from now.

I recommend that you do as I do: judge whether the rewards of post-image processing on the computer outweigh the cost, then click or not. ♦

OS/2 Ready

continued from page 43

corporate warfare. Final release is scheduled for October and it will sell for US\$49.95. For more information, visit <http://www.stardock.com>.

Image info

LogoArt for OS/2 has been updated. Version 1.1 of this vector-oriented graphics editor for OS/2 is now available, and new features include bitmap support. Visit <http://www.worklab.com> for more information.

And as any OS/2 user who plays with graphical images knows, it is virtually impossible to change Warp 4's image file association. But Practice Corp. has released a free fix to this bug allowing you to set the default association for image files to any program you like. Download it from <http://www.practice.xo.com>.

Computer radio

If you have a Reveal RA300 PC radio card, be sure to check out PM Radio 1.1. Designed for

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A Chorus lineup

BMT Micro has released a package of seven OS/2 utilities called Chorus for OS/2. Included in the suite are X-it (WPS enhancer), DragText (clipboard utility), Smalled (WYSIWYG editor),

SMEHTM Extensions (HTML extensions for Smalled), SwapMonitor (monitors your swap-per file), FileFreedom (file manager), and the strategy game Matrix. Suggested retail price is US\$49.95. For more information, check out <http://www.bmtmicro.com/chorus>. ♦

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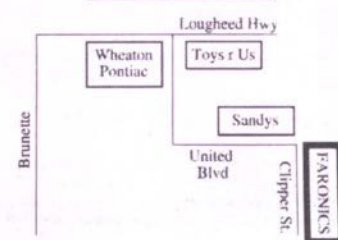


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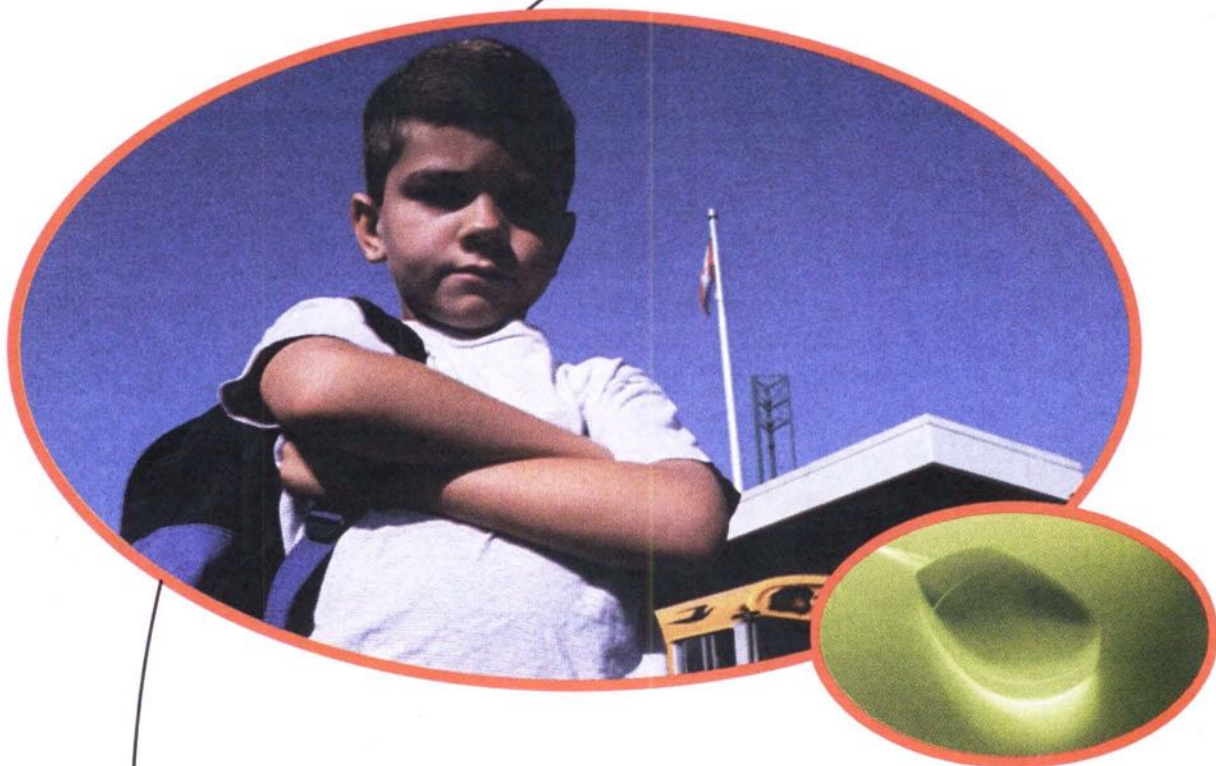
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